

The Most Delectable History
of
Reynard the Fox

Edited for Schools by
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	ix
CHARACTERS	xi
REYNARD THE FOX—CHAPTER I.	1
" " " II.	5
" " " III.	6
" " " IV.	10
" " " V.	11
" " " VI.	21
" " " VII.	24
" " " VIII.	27
" " " IX.	29
" " " X.	31
" " " XI.	35
" " " XII.	46
" " " XIII.	49
" " " XIV.	52
" " " XV.	58
" " " XVI.	63
" " " XVII.	68
" " " XVIII.	70
" " " XIX.	76
" " " XX.	80
" " " XXI.	83
" " " XXII.	87
" " " XXIII.	95

	PAGE
NOTES	99
GLOSSARY	106
EXERCISES AND SUBJECTS FOR COMPOSITION	113
PASSAGES FOR REPETITION	116
HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY	116
ILLUSTRATIONS	<i>frontispiece, 7, 17, 53, 59, 97</i>

INTRODUCTION

REYNARD THE FOX is not, in its origin, a story invented and written by some one man whom we call its author. It belongs to "folk-lore"—i.e. to the stories imagined and told by simple people in primitive times, handed down by word of mouth from one generation to another, and added to little by little in the process. When it was first written down we do not know. But the earliest version was in Latin, and was probably written in the tenth century. Later came versions in French and in Flemish, in verse and in prose. At last, near the end of the fifteenth century, came a version in English prose, one of the first books to be printed in England—at Caxton's famous press in Westminster.

Has the story any hidden meaning? Is it a political or religious satire, making fun—like *Gulliver's Travels*—of statesmen or lawyers or priests and monks? Not in its origin. It arose, as so many stories arise, out of the pure love of 'supposing' which is natural to human beings. But into the written versions of the middle ages a hidden meaning began to creep: little satirical turns were given by the writers, little episodes inserted with a side glance at solemn customs and institutions of the day. And when the reformers of the sixteenth

century made their attacks on the abuses of the Church of Rome, we cannot wonder that they hailed in *Reynard the Fox* a fable in which they could show, reflected as in a mirror, the craft and cunning of monks and ecclesiastical courts and lawyers.

CHARACTERS

THE LION, }
THE QUEEN, } WITHOUT PERSONAL NAMES.

FIRAPELL THE LEOPARD.

BRUIN THE BEAR.

ISEGRIM THE WOLF.

DAME ERESWINE, HIS WIFE.

REYNARD THE FOX.

DAME ERMELINE, HIS WIFE

REYNARDINE, ROSSEL, THEIR SONS.

GRIMBART THE BADGER.

DAME SLOPECADE, HIS WIFE.

TIBERT THE CAT.

KYWARD THE HARE.

CURTOIS THE HOUND.

THE PANTHER, WITHOUT PERSONAL NAME.

CHANTICLEER THE COCK.

DAME PARTLET, HIS WIFE.

TANTART, CRAGANT, COPPLE, THEIR DAUGHTERS.

BELLIN THE KAM.

DAME OLEWAY, HIS WIFE.

BRUEL THE GOOSE.

BALDWIN THE ASS.

BORTLE THE BULL.

HAMEL THE OX.

TISELLIN THE RAVEN.

LAPRELL THE CONEY.

CORBAUT THE ROOK.

DAME SHARPBEAK, HIS WIFE.

MARTIN THE APE.

DAME RUKENAW, HIS WIFE.

BITELUS, THEIR ELDER SON.

DAME PANTECROTE. THE OTTER'S WIFE.

DAME ATROT, A SHE-APE.

BOCART. THE KING'S SECRETARY [MAY BE A MAN].

THE PRIEST, NO PERSONAL NAME.

DAME JULLOCK, HIS WIFE.

MARTINET, THEIR SON.

LANFERT THE CARPENTER.

CHAPTER I

*How the Lion proclaimed a solemn Feast at his Court,
and how Isegrim the Wolf and his Wife, and Curtois
the Hound, made their first complaints of Reynard
the Fox.*

It was about the Feast of *Pentecost* (which is commonly called Whitsuntide), when the woods are in their lusty-hood and gallantry, and every tree clothed in the green and white livery of glorious leaves and sweet-smelling blossoms, and the earth is covered in her fairest mantle of flowers, while the birds with much joy entertain her with the delight of their harmonious songs. Even at this time and entrance of the lusty spring, the *Lion*, the royal King of beasts, to celebrate this holy feast time with all triumphant 10 ceremony, intends to keep open court at his great palace of *Sanden*, and to that end, by solemn proclamation, makes known over all his kingdom to all beasts whatsoever, that, upon pain to be held in contempt, every one should resort to that great celebration. Within a few days after, at the time appointed, all beasts both great and small came in infinite multitudes to the court, only *Reynard* the fox excepted, who knew himself guilty in so many

trespasses against many beasts, that his coming thither must needs have put his life in great hazard and danger.

Now when the King had assembled all his court together, there were few beasts found but made their several complaints against the fox, but especially *Isegrim* the wolf, who, being the first and principal complainant, came with all his lineage and kindred, and standing before the King, spoke in
10 this manner :

‘ My dread and dearest Sovereign Lord the King, I humbly beseech you, that from the height and strength of your great power, and the multitude of your mercies, you will be pleased to take pity on the great trespasses and unsufferable injuries which that unworthy creature *Reynard* the fox hath done to me, my wife, and our whole family. Now to give your highness some taste of these, first know (if it please your Majesty) that this *Reynard* came into my house
20 by violence, and against the will of my wife, where, finding my children laid in their quiet couch, he there assaulted them in such a manner that they became blind. For this offence a day was set and appointed wherein *Reynard* should come to excuse himself, and to take a solemn oath that he was guiltless of that high injury ; but as soon as the book was tendered before him, he that well knew his own guiltiness refused to swear, and ran instantly into his hole, both in contempt of your Majesty and your laws. This,
30 my dread Lord, many of the noblest beasts know which now are resident in your court : nor hath this alone bounded his malice, but in many other things

he hath trespassed against me, which to relate, neither the time nor your highness's patience would give sufferance thereunto. Suffice it, mine injuries are so great that none can exceed them, but I must expect from him amends, and from your Majesty mercy.'

When the wolf had spoken these words, there stood by him a little hound whose name was *Curtois*, who, stepping forth, made likewise a grievous complaint unto the King against the fox, saying that in the extreme cold season of the winter, when the frost was most violent, he being half starved and detained from all manner of prey, had no more meat left him to sustain his life than one poor pudding; which pudding the said *Reynard* had most unjustly taken away from him.

But the hound could hardly let these words fly from his lips, when, with a fiery and angry countenance, in sprang *Tibert* the cat amongst them, and falling down before the King, said, 'My Lord the King, I must confess the fox is here grievously complained upon, yet were other beasts' actions searched, each would have enough to do for his own clearing. Touching the complaint of *Curtois* the hound, it was an offence committed many years ago, and though I myself complain of no injury, yet was the pudding mine and not his; for I won it by night out of a mill when the miller lay asleep, so that if *Curtois* could challenge any share thereof, it must be from mine interest.'

30

When *Panther* heard these words of the cat, he stood forth and said, 'Do you imagine, *Tibert*, that it

were a just or a good course that *Reynard* should not be complained upon? Why the whole world knows he is a murderer, a vagabond, and a thief. Indeed he loveth not truly any creature, no not his Majesty himself, but would suffer his highness to lose both honour and renown, so that he might thereby attain to himself but so much as the leg of a fat hen; I shall tell you what I saw him do yesterday to *Kyward* the hare, that now standeth in the King's protection.

10 He promised unto *Kyward* that he would teach him his *credo*, and make him a good chaplain; he made him come sit between his legs and sing and cry aloud *credo, credo*. My way lay thereby, and I heard the song: then coming nearer, I found that Mr. *Reynard* had left his first note and song, and begun to play his old deceit; for he had caught *Kyward* by the throat, and had I not come at that time, he had taken his life also, as you may see by the fresh wound on *Kyward* at this present. O my Lord the King,

20 if you suffer this unpunished, and let him go quit, that hath thus broken your peace, and profaned your dignity, and doing no right according to the judgment of your laws, your princely children many years hereafter shall bear the slander of this evil.'

'Certainly, *Panther*,' said *Isegrim*, 'you say true, and it is fit they receive the benefit of justice that desire to live in peace.'

CHAPTER II

How Grimbard the Brock spake for Reynard before the King.

THEN spake *Grimbard* the brock, that was *Reynard's* sister's son, being much moved with anger : ‘ *Isegrim*, you are malicious, and it is a common saw, *Malice never spake well* ; what can you say against my kinsman *Reynard* ? I would you durst adventure, that whichever of you had most injured one another might die the death, and be hanged as a felon. I tell you, were he here in the court, and as much in the King's favour as you are, it would be much too little satisfaction for you to ask him mercy. ¹⁰ You have many times bitten and torn my kinsman with your venomous teeth, and oftener much than I can reckon. •

‘ Now comes *Kyward* the hare with his complaint, which to me seems but a trifle, for if he will learn to read, and read not his lesson aright, who will blame the schoolmaster *Reynard* if he give him due correction ? for if scholars be not beaten and chastened they will never learn.

‘ Lastly complaineth *Curtois* that he with great pain ²⁰ had gotten a pudding in the winter, being a season in which victuals are hard to find ; methinks silence would have become him better, for he had stolen it ; and it is fit that be evil lost which was evil won ; who can blame *Reynard* to take stolen goods from a thief ? Alas, how do these complaints hurt him !

mine uncle is a gentleman and a true man, nor can he endure falsehood; he doth nothing without the counsel of his priest. I affirm, since my Lord the King proclaimed his peace, he never thought to hurt any man. He eateth but once a day, he liveth as a recluse, he chastiseth his body, and weareth a shirt of haircloth; it is above a year since he ate any flesh (as I have been truly informed by them which came but yesterday from him); he hath forsaken his castle
 10 *Malepardus*, and abandoned all royal state, a poor hermitage retains him, hunting he hath forsworn, and his wealth he hath scattered, living only by alms and good men's charities; doing infinite penance for his sins, so that he is become pale and lean with praying and fasting.'

Thus, whilst *Grimbard* his nephew stood preaching, they perceived coming down the hill unto them, stout *Chanticleer* the cock, who brought upon a bier a dead hen, of whom *Reynard* had bitten off the head, and
 20 was brought to the King to have knowledge thereof.

CHAPTER III

How Chanticleer the Cock complained of Reynard the Fox.

CHANTICLEER marched foremost, smote piteously his hands and feathers, whilst on the other side the bier went two sorrowful hens—the one was *Tantart*, the other the good hen *Cragant*, being two of the fairest hens between *Holland* and *Arden*; these hens bore each of them a straight bright burning taper, and these



hens were sisters to *Copple*, which lay dead on the bier, and in the marching they cried piteously, 'Alack and weh-a-day for the death of *Copple*, our dear sister.' Two young hens bare the bier, which cackled so heavily, and wept so loud for the death of *Copple* their mother, that the hills gave an echo to their clamour. Thus being come before the King, *Chanticleer*, kneeling down, spake, in this manner :

10 'Most merciful and my great Lord the King, vouchsafe, I beseech you, to hear our complaint, and redress those injuries which *Reynard* hath unjustly done to me, and to my children that here stand weeping. For so it is, most mighty sir, that in the beginning of April, when the weather was fair, and also I had eight valiant sons, and seven fair daughters, which my wife had hatched, all which were strong and fat, and walked in a yard well walled and fenced round about, wherein they had in several sheds for their guard six stout mastiff dogs, which had torn
20 the skins of many wild beasts, so that my children feared not any evil which might happen unto them. But *Reynard*, that false and dissembling traitor, envying their happy fortune because of their safety, many times assailed the walls, and gave such dangerous assaults, that the dogs divers times were let forth unto him and hunted him away. Yea, once they lighted upon him, and bit him, and made him pay the price for his theft, and his torn skin witnessed ; yet nevertheless he escaped, the more was the pity ;
30 albeit, we were quit of his troubling a great while after. At last he came in the likeness of a hermit, and brought me a letter to read. sealed with your

Majesty's seal, in which I found written, that your highness had made peace throughout all your realm, and that no manner of beast or fowl should do injury one to another. He affirmed unto me that for his own part he was become a monk or cloistered recluse, vowing to perform a daily penance for his sins; and showed unto me his beads, his books, and the hair shirt next to his skin, saying in humble wise unto me, "Sir *Chanticleer*, never henceforth be afraid of me, for I have vowed nevermore to eat flesh. I am 10 now waxed old, and would only remember my soul; therefore I take my leave, for I have yet my noon and my even song to say." Which spake, he departed, saying his *credo* as he went, and laid him down under a hawthorn; at this I was exceeding glad, that I took no heed, but went and clucked my children together, and walked without the wall, which I shall ever rue. For false *Reynard*, lying under a bush, came creeping betwixt us and the gate, and suddenly surprised one of my children, which he 20 trussed up in his mail and bore away, to my great sorrow. For having tasted the sweetness of our flesh, neither hunter nor hound can protect or keep him from us. Night and day he waits upon us with that greediness, that of fifteen of my children he hath left me but four unslaughtered, and yesterday *Gepple* my daughter, which here lieth dead on this bier, was after her murder, by a kennel of hounds, rescued from him. This is my plaint, and this I leave to your highness's mercy to take pity of me, and the loss of 30 my fair children.'

CHAPTER IV

The King's answer to the Cock's complaint, and how they sung the Dirge.

THEY spake the King : ' Sir *Grimbard*, hear you this of your uncle the recluse ? he hath fasted and prayed well : and well, believe me, if I live a year, he shall dearly abide it. As for you, *Chanticleer*, your complaint is heard and shall be cured ; to your daughter that is dead, we will give her the right of burial, and with solemn dirges bring her to the earth, with worship ; which finished, we will consult with our lords how to do you right and justice against the murderer.'

10 Then began the *Placebo Domine*, with all the verses belonging to it, which are too many to recite ; and as soon as the dirge was done, the body was interred, and upon it a fair marble stone laid, being polished as bright as glass, in which was engraven in great letters this inscription following :

Copple,
Chanticleer's daughter,
whom Reynard the fox has slain,
lieth here buried ;

20 ♪ Mourn thou that readeest it,
for her death was unjust and lamentable.

After this the King sent for his lords and wisest counsellors to consult how this foul murder of *Reynard's* might be punished. In the end it was concluded that *Reynard* should be sent for, and without all excuse

to appear before the King to answer those trespasses should be objected against him, and that this message should be delivered by *Bruin* the bear. To all this the King gave consent, and calling him before him, said, 'Sir *Bruin*, it is our pleasure that you deliver this message, yet in the delivery thereof have great regard to yourself, for *Reynard* is full of policy, and knoweth how to dissemble, flatter, and betray. He hath a world of snares to entangle you withal, and without great exercise of judgment, will make a scorn¹⁰ and mock of the best wisdom breathing.'

'My Lord,' answered Sir *Bruin*, 'let me alone with *Reynard*, I am not such a truant in discretion, to become a mock to his knavery;' and thus full of jollity the bear departed; if his return be as jovial there is no fear in his well speeding.

• CHAPTER V

How Bruin the Bear sped with Reynard the Fox.

THE next morning away went *Bruin* the bear in quest of the fox, armed against all plots of deceit whatsoever. Now when *Bruin* was come to *Malepardus*, he found the gates close shut, at which after he had 20 knocked, sitting on his tail, he called aloud, 'Sir *Reynard*, are you at home? I am *Bruin* your kinsman, whom the King hath sent to summon you to the court, to answer many foul accusations exhibited against you, and hath taken a great vow, that if you fail to appear to this summons, that your life shall answer your contempt, and your goods and honours

shall lie confiscate at his highness's mercy. Therefore, fair kinsman, be advised of your friend, and go with me to the court to shun the danger that else will fall upon you.'

Reynard, lying close by the gate, as his custom was for the warm sun's sake, hearing those words, departed into one of his holes, for *Malepardus* is full of many intricate and curious rooms, which labyrinth-wise he could pass through, when either his danger or the benefit of any prey required the same. There he meditated awhile with himself how he might counterplot and bring the bear to disgrace (whom he knew loved him not) and himself to honour; at last he came forth, and said, 'Dear uncle *Bruin*, you are exceeding welcome; pardon my slowness in coming, for at your first speech I was saying my even song, and devotion must not be neglected. Believe me, he hath done you no good service, nor do I thank him which hath sent you this weary and long journey, in which your much sweat and toil far exceeds the worth of the labour. Certainly had you not come, I had to-morrow been at the court of my own accord, yet at this time my sorrow is much lessened, inasmuch as your counsel at this present may return me double benefit. Alas, cousin, could his Majesty find no messenger a messenger than your noble self to employ in these trivial affairs? Truly it appears strange to me, especially since, next his royal self, you are of greatest renown both in blood and riches. For my part, I would we were both at court, for I fear our journey will be exceeding troublesome. To speak truth, since I made mine abstinence from flesh, I have

eaten such strange new meats, that my body is very much distempered, and swelleth as if it would break.'

'Alas, dear cousin,' said the bear, 'what meat is that which maketh you so ill?'

'Uncle,' answered he, 'what will it profit you to know? the meat was simple and mean. We poor men are no lords, you know, but eat that for necessity which others eat for wantonness; yet not to delay you, that which I ate was honeycombs, great, full, and most pleasant, which, compelled by hunger, I ate too 10 unmeasurably and am thereby infinitely distempered.'

'Ha,' quoth *Bruin*, 'honeycombs? do you make such slight respect of them, nephew? why, it is meat for the greatest emperor in the world. Fair nephew, help me but to some of that honey, and command me whilst I live; for one little part thereof I will be your servant everlastingly.'

'Sure,' said the fox, 'uncle, you but jest with me.'

'But jest with you,' replied *Bruin*; 'beshrew my heart then, for I am in that serious earnest, that for 20 one lick thereat you shall make me the faithfulest of all your kindred.'

'Nay,' said the fox, 'if you be in earnest, then know I will bring you where so much is, that ten of you shall not be able to devour it at a meal, only for your love's sake, which above all things I desire, uncle.'

'Not ten of us?' said the bear, 'it is impossible; for had I all the honey betwixt *Hybla* and *Portugal*, yet I could in a short space eat it all myself.' 30

'Then know, uncle,' quoth the fox, 'that near at hand here dwelleth a husbandman named *Lanfert*,

who is master of so much honey, that you cannot consume it in seven years, which for your love and friendship's sake I will put into your safe possession.'

Bruin, mad upon the honey, swore, that to have one good meal thereof he would not only be his faithful friend, but also stop the mouths of all his adversaries.

Reynard, smiling at his easy belief, said, 'If you will have seven ton, uncle, you shall have it.'

These words pleased the bear so well, and made
10 him so pleasant, that he could not stand for laughing.

Well, thought the fox, this is good fortune, sure I will lead him where he shall laugh more measurably; and then said, 'Uncle, we must delay no time, and I will spare no pain for your sake, which for none of my kin I would perform.'

The bear gave him many thanks, and so away they went, the fox promising him as much honey as he could bear, but meant as many strokes as he could undergo. In the end they came to *Lanfert's*
20 house, the sight whereof made the bear rejoice. This *Lanfert* was a stout and lusty carpenter, who the other day had brought into his yard a great oak, which, as their manner is, he began to cleave, and had struck into it two wedges in such wise that the cleft stood a great way open, at which the fox rejoiced much, for it was answerable to his wish. So with a laughing countenance he said to the bear, 'Behold now, dear uncle, and be careful of yourself, for within this tree is so much honey that it is unmeasurable.
30 Try if you can get into it, yet, good uncle, eat moderately, for albeit the combs are sweet and good, yet a surfeit is dangerous, and may be troublesome to

your body, which I would not for a world, since no harm can come to you but must be my dishonour.'

'Sorrow not for me, nephew *Reynard*,' said the bear, 'nor think me such a fool that I cannot temper mine appetite.'

'It is true, my best uncle, I was too bold. I pray you enter in at the end, and you shall find your desire.'

The bear with all haste entered the tree, with his two feet forward, and thrust his head into the cleft, 10 quite over the ears; which when the fox perceived, he instantly ran and pulled the wedges out of the tree, so that he locked the bear fast therein, and then neither flattery nor anger availed the bear. For the nephew had by his deceit brought the uncle into so false a prison that it was impossible by any art to free himself of the same. Alas, what profited now his great strength and valour? Why, they were both causes of more vexation; and finding himself destitute of all relief, he began to howl and bray, and with 20 scratching and tumbling to make such a noise, that *Lanfert*, amazed, came hastily out of his house, having in his hand a sharp hook, whilst the bear lay wallowing and roaring within the tree.

The fox from afar off said to the bear in scorn and mocking, 'Is the honey good, uncle, which you eat? How do you? Eat not too much, I beseech you. Pleasant things are apt to surfeit, and you may hinder your journey to the court. When *Lanfert* cometh he will give you drink to digest it, and wash 30 it down your throat.'

And having thus said, he went towards his castle.

But by this time, *Lanfert*, finding the bear fast taken in the tree, he ran to his neighbours and desired them to come into his yard, for there was a bear fast taken there. This was noised through all the town, so that there was neither man, nor woman, nor child but ran thither, some with one weapon, and some with another—as goads, rakes, broomstaves, or what they could gather up. The priest had the handle of the cross, the clerk the holy water sprinkler, and the
10 priest's wife, Dame *Jullock*, with her distaff, for she was then spinning; nay, the old beldames came that had ne'er a tooth in their heads. This army put *Bruin* into a great fear, being none but himself to withstand them, and hearing the clamour of the noise which came thundering upon him, he wrestled and pulled so extremely, that he got out his head, but he left behind him all the skin, and his ears also; insomuch that never creature beheld a fouler or more deformed beast. For the blood covering all his face,
20 and his hands leaving the claws and skin behind them, nothing remained but ugliness. It was an ill market the bear came to, for he lost both motion and sight—that is, feet and eyes. But notwithstanding this torment, *Lanfert*, the priest, and the whole parish came upon him, and so becudgelled him about his body part, that it might well be a warning to all his misery, to know that ever the weakest shall still go most to the wall. This the bear found by experience, for every one exercised the height of their fury upon
30 him.

The poor bear in this massacre sat and sighed extremely, groaning under the burden of their strokes,



of which *Lanfert's* were the greatest and thundered most dreadfully. *Bruin* received of him many showers of stones till *Lanfert's* brother, rushing before the rest with a staff, struck the bear in the head such a blow, that he could neither hear nor see, so that awaking from his astonishment the bear leaped into the river adjoining, through a cluster of wives there standing together, of which he threw divers into the water, which was large and deep, amongst whom the
10 parson's wife was one ; which the parson seeing how she floated like a sea-mew, he left striking the bear, and cried to the rest of the company, ' Help ! oh help ! Dame *Jullock* is in the water ; help, both men and women, for whosoever saves her, I give free pardon of all their sins and transgressions, and remit all penance imposed whatsoever.' This heard, every one left the bear to help Dame *Jullock*, which as soon as the bear saw, he cut the stream and swam away as fast as he could, but the priest with a great noise
20 pursued him, crying in his rage, ' Turn, villain, that I may be revenged of thee ' ; but the bear swam in the strength of the stream and suspected not his calling, for he was proud that he was so escaped from them. Only he bitterly cursed the honey tree and the fox, which had not only betrayed him, but had made him lose his hood from his face, and his gloves from his fingers. In this sort he swam some three miles down the water, in which time he grew so weary that he went on land to get ease, where blood trickled
30 down his face ; he groaned, sighed, and drew his breath so short, as if his last hour had been expiring.
Now whilst these things were in doing, the fox in

his way home stole a fat hen, and threw her into his mail, and running through a bypath that no man might perceive him, he came towards the river with infinite joy; for he suspected that the bear was certainly slain: therefore said to himself, 'My fortune is as I wished it, for the greatest enemy I had in the court is now dead, nor can any man suspect me guilty thereof.' But as he spake these words, looking towards the river, he espied where *Bruin* the bear lay and rested, which struck his heart with grief, and he railed against *Lanfert* the carpenter, saying, 'Silly fool that thou art, what madman would have lost such good venison, especially being so fat and wholesome, and for which he took no pains, for he was taken to his hand; any man would have been proud of the fortune which thou neglectest.' Thus fretting and chiding, he came to the river, where he found the bear all wounded and bloody, of which *Reynard* was only guilty; yet in scorn he said to the bear, '*Monsieur, Dieu vous garde.*'

'O thou foul red villain,' said the bear to himself, 'what impudence is like to this?'

But the fox went on with his speech, and said, 'What, uncle? have you forgot anything at *Lanfert's*, or have you paid him for the honeycombs you stole? If you have not, it will redound much to your disgrace, which before you shall undergo, I will pay him, for them myself. Sure the honey was excellent good, and I know much more of the same price. Good uncle, tell me before I go, into what order do you mean to enter, that you wear this new-fashioned hood? Will you be a monk, an abbot, or a friar? Surely he that shaved your crown hath cropped your ears; also

your foretop is lost, and your gloves are gone ; fie, sloven, go not barehanded, they say you can sing *peccavi* rarely.'

These taunts made *Bruin* mad with rage, but because he could not take revenge, he was content to let him talk his pleasure. Then after a small rest he plunged again into the river, and swam down the stream, and landed on the other side, where he began with much grief to meditate how he might get to the
10 court, for he had lost his ears, his talons, and all the skin off his feet, so that had a thousand deaths followed him, he could not go. Yet of necessity he must move, that in the end compelled by extremity, he set his tail on the ground, and tumbled his body over and over ; so by degrees, tumbling now half a mile, and then half a mile, in the end he tumbled to the court, where divers beholding his strange manner of approach, they thought some prodigy had come towards them ; but in the end the King knew him,
20 and grew angry, saying, 'It is sir *Bruin*, my servant ; what villains have wounded him thus, or where hath he been that he brings his death thus along with him ?'

'O my dread Sovereign Lord the King,' cried out the bear, 'I complain me grievously unto you ; behold how I am massacred, which I humbly beseech you revenge on that false *Reynard*, who, for doing your royal pleasure, hath brought me to this disgrace and slaughter.'

30 Then said the King, 'How durst he do this ? now by my crown I swear I will take the revenge which shall make the traitors tremble !'

Whereupon the King sent for all his council, and consulted how and in what sort to persecute against the fox, where it was generally concluded, that he should be again summoned to appear and answer his trespasses; and the party to summon him they appointed to be *Tibert* the cat, as well for his gravity as wisdom; all which pleased the King well.

CHAPTER VI

How the King sent Tibert the Cat for Reynard the Fox.

THEN the King called for sir *Tibert* the cat, and said to him, 'Sir *Tibert*, you shall go to *Reynard*, and say to him the second time, and command him to appear, 10 and answer his offences; for though he be cruel to other beasts, yet to you he is courteous. Assure him if he fail at your first summons, that I will take so severe a course against him and his posterity, that his example shall terrify all offenders.'

Then said *Tibert* the cat, 'My dread Lord, they were my foes which thus advised you, for there is nothing in me that can force him either to come or tarry. I beseech your Majesty send some one of greater power; I am little and feeble. Besides, if noble sir 20 *Bruin*, that is so strong and mighty, could not enforce him, what will my weakness avail?'

The King replied, 'It is your wisdom, sir *Tibert*, I employ, and not your strength, and many prevail with art, when violence returns with lost labour.'

'Well,' said the cat, 'since it is your pleasure, it

must be accomplished ; Heaven make my fortune better than my heart presageth.'

Thus *Tibert* made things in readiness, and went towards *Malepardus*, and in his journey he saw come flying towards him one of Saint *Martin's* birds, to whom the cat cried aloud, 'Hail, gentle bird, I beseech thee turn thy wings and fly on my right hand.' But the bird turned the contrary way, and flew on his left side ; then grew the cat very heavy, for he
10 was wise and skilful in augurism, and knew the sign to be ominous ; nevertheless, as many do, he armed himself with better hope, and went to *Malepardus*, where he found the fox standing before his castle gates, to whom *Tibert* said, 'Health to my fair cousin *Reynard*, so it is that the King by me summons you to the court, in which if you fail or defer time, there is nothing more assured unto you than a cruel and a sudden death.'

The fox answered, 'Welcome, dear cousin *Tibert*,
20 I obey your command, and wish my Lord the King infinite days of happiness ; only let me entreat you to rest with me to-night, and take such cheer as my simple house affordeth. To-morrow, as early as you will, we will go towards the court, for I have no kinsman I trust so dearly as yourself. Here was with me the other day the treacherous knight sir *Bruin* the bear, who looked upon me with that tyrannous cruelty, that I would not for the wealth of an empire have hazarded my person with him. But,
30 my dear cousin, with you I will go were a thousand sicknesses upon me.'

Tibert replied, 'You speak like a noble gentleman,

and methinks it is best now to go forward, for the moon shines as bright as day.'

'Nay, dear cousin,' said the fox, 'let us take the day before us, so may we encounter with our friends; the night is full of danger and suspicion.'

'Well,' said the cat, 'if it be your pleasure, I am content; what shall we eat?'

Reynard said, 'Truly my store is small, the best I have is a honeycomb, too pleasant and sweet, what think you of it?'

10

Tibert replieth, 'It is meat I little respect, and seldom eat; I had rather have one mouse than all the honey in *Europe*.'

'A mouse,' said *Reynard*, 'why, my dear cousin, here dwelleth a priest hard by, who hath a barn by his house so full of mice that I think half the wains in the parish are not able to bear them.'

'O dear *Reynard*,' quoth the cat, 'do but lead me thither, and make me your servant for ever.'

'Why,' said the fox, 'love you mice so exceedingly?'

'Beyond expression,' quoth the cat; 'why, a mouse is beyond venison or the delicatest cates on princes' tables; therefore conduct me thither, and command my friendship in any matter; had you slain my father, my mother, and all my kin, I would clearly forgive you.'

CHAPTER VII

How Tibert the Cat was deceived by Reynard the Fox.

THUS away they went with all speed to the priest's barn, which was well walled about with a mud wall, where but the night before the fox had broken in, and stolen from the priest an exceeding fat hen, at which the priest was so angry, that he set a gin or snare before the hole to catch him at his next coming; which the false fox knew perfectly, and therefore said to the cat, 'Sir *Tibert*, creep in at this hole, and believe it you shall not tarry a minute's space, but
10 you shall have more mice than you are able to devour. Hark, you may hear how they peep; when you have had enough, come again, and I will stay and await for you here at this hole, that to-morrow we may go together to the court. But, good cousin, stay not too long, for I know my wife will hourly expect us.'

'Then,' said the cat, 'think you I may safely enter in at this hole? these priests are wise, and subtle, and couch their danger so close, that rashness is soon overtaken.'

20 'Why, cousin *Tibert*,' said the fox, 'I never saw you turn coward before; what, man, fear you a shadow?'

The cat, ashamed at his fear, sprang quickly in at the hole, but was presently caught fast by the neck in the gin; which as soon as the cat felt and perceived, he quickly leaped back again, so that the snare running close together, he was half strangled, so that

he began to struggle and cry out and exclaim most piteously.

Reynard stood before the hole and heard all, at which he infinitely rejoiced, and in great scorn said, 'Cousin *Tibert*, love you mice? I hope they be well fed for your sake; knew the priest or *Martinet* of your feasting, I know them of so good disposition, they would bring you sauce quickly. Methinks you sing at your meat, is that the court fashion? If it be, I would *Isegrim* the wolf were coupled with you, 10 that all my friends might be feasted together.'

But all this while the poor cat was fast, and mewed so piteously, that *Martinet* leaped out of bed, and cried to his people, 'Arise, for the thief is taken that had stolen our hens.'

With these words the priest unfortunately rose up and awaked all in his house, crying, 'The fox is taken, the fox is taken!' and arising, he gave to *Jullock* his wife an offering candle to light, and then coming first to *Tibert*, he smote him with a great 20 staff, and after him many other, so that the cat received many deadly blows, and the anger of *Martinet* was so great, that he struck out one of the cat's eyes, which he did to second the priest, thinking at one blow to dash out the cat's brains. But the cat perceiving his death so near him, in a desperate mood he leaped upon the priest, and scratched and tore him in so dread a manner, that the poor priest fell down in a swoon, so that every man left the cat to revive the priest. And whilst they were doing this, the fox 30 returned home to *Malepardus*, for he imagined the cat was past all hope to escape. But the poor cat

seeing all his foes busy about the priest, he presently began to gnaw and bite the cord, till he had sheared it quite asunder in the midst. And he leaped out of the hole and went roaring and stumbling, like the bear, to the King's court. But before he got thither, it was fair day, and the sun being risen, he entered the court like the pitifullest beast that ever was beheld; for by the fox's craft his body was beaten and bruised, his bones shivered and
10 broken, one of his eyes lost, and his skin rent and mangled.

This when the King beheld, and saw *Tibert* so pitifully mangled, he grew infinitely angry and took counsel once more how to revenge the injuries upon the fox. After some consultation, *Grimbard* the brock, *Reynard's* sister's son, said to the rest of the King's council, 'My good lords, though my uncle were twice so evil as those complaints make him, yet there is remedy enough against his mischiefs. There-
20 fore it is fit you do him justice as to a man of his rank, which is, he must be the third time summoned, and if then he appear not, make him guilty of all that is laid against him.'

Then the King demanded of the brock whom he thought fittest to summon him, or who would be so desperate to hazard his hands, his ears, nay, his life, with so tyrannous and irreligious a being?

'Truly,' answered the brock, 'if it please your Majesty, I am that desperate person who dare ad-
30 venture to carry the message to my most subtle kinsman, if your highness but command me.'

CHAPTER VIII

How Grimbard the Brock was sent to bid the Fox to the Court.

THEN said the King, 'Go, *Grimbard*, for I command you; yet take heed of *Reynard*, for he is subtle and malicious.'

The brock thanked his Majesty, and so taking humble leave, went to *Malepardus*, where he found *Reynard* and *Ermelin* his wife sporting with their young whelps; then having saluted his uncle and his aunt, he said, 'Take heed, fair uncle, that your absence from the court add not more mischief to your cause than the offence doth deserve. Believe, it is 10 high time you appear at the court, since your delay doth beget but more danger and punishment. The complaints against you are infinite, and this is your third time of summons; therefore your wisdom may tell you, that if you delay but one day further, there is not left to you or yours any hope of mercy. For within three days your castle will be demolished, your kindred made slaves, and yourself exempted for a public example. Therefore, my best uncle, I beseech you recollect your wisdom, and go with me presently 20 to the court, I doubt not but your discretion shall excuse you, for you have passed through many as eminent perils, and made your foes ashamed, whilst the innocence of your cause hath borne you spotless from the tribunal.'

Reynard answered, 'Nephew, you say true, and

I will be advised and go with you, not to answer offences, but in that I know the court stands in need of my counsel. The King's mercy I doubt not, if I may come to speak with his Majesty, though mine offences were ten times doubled ; for I know the court cannot stand without me, and that shall his highness understand truly. Though I know I have many enemies, yet it troubles me not ; for mine innocence shall awaken their injuries, and they shall know that
10 in high matters of state and policy *Reynard* cannot be missing. It is the envy of others hath made me leave the court, for though I know their shallowness cannot disgrace me, yet may their multitudes oppress me ; nevertheless, nephew, I will go with you to the court, and answer for myself, and not hazard the welfare of my wife and children. The King is too mighty, and though he do me injury, yet will I bear it with patience.' This spoke, he turned to his wife and said, ' Dame *Ermelin*, have care of my children,
20 especially *Reynardine* my youngest son, for he had much of my love, and I hope will follow my steps ; also *Rossel* is passing hopeful, and I love them entirely, therefore regard them, and if I escape, doubt not but my love shall requite you.'

At this leave-taking *Ermelin* wept, and her children howled, for their lord and victualler was gone, and *Matepardus* left unprovided.

[On the way to court *Reynard* confessed to *Grimbard* the many offences he had been guilty of against
30 *Bruin*, *Tibert*, *Chanticleer* and *Isegrim*, and was absolved. But the genuineness of *Reynard's* penitence may be gauged by the fact that almost immedi-

ately afterwards he caught a young capon, which however escaped.]

CHAPTER IX

How the Fox came to the Court, and how he excused himself.

Now they made haste towards the court, which as soon as the fox saw, his heart quaked for fear; for he knew well the crimes he was to answer, that they were infinite and heinous.

As soon as it was bruited in the court that *Reynard* the fox, and *Grimbard* his kinsman were arrived there, every one, from the highest to the lowest, prepared himself to complain of the fox; at which *Reynard's* 10 heart quaked, but his countenance kept the old garb, and he went as proudly as ever he was wont with his nephew through the high street, and came as gallantly into the court as if he had been the King's son and as clear from trespass as the most innocent whosoever; and when he came before the chair of state, in which the King sat, he said, 'Heaven give your Majesty glory and renown above all the princes of the earth; I assure your highness there was never king had a truer servant than myself have been to 20 you, and yet am, and so will die. Nevertheless, my dread Lord, I know there be many in this court that seek my confusion, if they could win belief with your Majesty. But you scorn the slanders of malice, and although in these days flatterers have the most room in princes' courts, yet with you it is not so, nor shall they reap anything but shame for their labour.'

But the King cut him short at these words, and said, 'Peace, traitorous *Reynard*, I know your dissimulation, and can expound your flattery, but both shall now fail you. Think you I can be caught with the music of your words? No, it hath too oft deceived me; the peace which I commanded and swore unto, that have you broken.'

And as he would have gone forward, *Chanticleer* cried out, 'O how have I lost this noble peace?'

10 'Be still, *Chanticleer*,' said the King, and then he proceeded, 'Thou evil among good ones, with what face canst thou say thou lovest me, and seest all those wretched creatures ready to disprove thee, whose very wounds yet spit bloody defiance upon thee; and for which believe thy dearest life shall answer.'

'My dread Lord,' said the fox, 'if *Bruin's* crown be bloody, what is that to me? If your Majesty employed him in a message, and he would neglect it
20 to steal honey at the carpenter's house, where he received his wounds, how shall I amend it? If revenge he sought, why did he not take it himself, he is strong and puissant? As for *Tibert*, whom I received with all friendship, if he against my will or advice will steal into the priest's barn to catch mice, and there lose his eyes, nay, his life, wherein is mine offence, or how become I their guardian?' O my dread Lord, you may do your royal pleasure, and however mine innocence plead, yet your will may
30 adjudge me to what death contents you. I am your vassal, and have no support but your mercy; I know your strength and mine own weakness, and that

my death can yield you but small satisfaction, yet whatsoever your will is, that to me shall be most acceptable.' ”

And as he thus spake, *Bellin* the ram stepped forth, and his ewe dame *Oleway*, and besought the King to hear their complaint ; with them *Bruin* the bear and all his mighty lineage ; and *Tibert* the cat, *Isegrim* the wolf, *Kyward* the hare, and *Panther*, the boar, the camel, and *Bruel* the goose, the kid and the colt, *Baldwin* the ass, *Bortle* the bull, and *Hamel* the ox, 10 the weasel, *Chanticleer* the cock, and *Partlet* with all her children ; all these with one entire noise cried out against the fox, and so moved the King with their complaints, that the fox was taken and arrested.

CHAPTER X

How the Fox was arrested and judged to death.

UPON this arrest a parliament was called, and every voice went that *Reynard* should be executed. Notwithstanding he answered every objection severally, though great art was used both in one and the other to the wonderful admiration of all that heard him. But witnesses examined, and every proof made 20 pregnant, the fox was condemned, and judgment was given, that he should be hanged till his body were dead ; at which sentence the fox cast down his head, for all his jollity was lost, and no flattery nor no words now prevailed.

This done, *Grimbard* his nephew, and divers others near him in blood (which could not endure to see him

die) took their leave of the King and departed from the court. When the King noted what gallant young gentlemen departed thence, all sad and weeping, being near of the fox's blood and alliance, he said to himself, 'It behoveth us to take good and mature counsel; though *Reynard* have some faults, yet he hath many friends, and more virtues.'

As the king was thus thinking, the cat said to the bear, 'Sir *Bruin*, and you, sir *Isegrim*, why are you
10 slow in this execution? The even is almost come, and here be many bushes and hedges; if he escape and quit himself of this danger, his subtilty is so great that not all the art in the world shall ever again entangle him. If you mean to execute him, then proceed, for before the gallows can be made, it will be dark night.'

At these words *Isegrim*, remembering himself, said, 'There is a pair of gallows near at hand' (and with that fetched a deep sigh), which the cat noting, said,
20 'Are you afraid, sir *Isegrim*, or is this execution against your mind? You may remember that it was only his work that both your brethren were hanged; and sure had you judgment, you would thank him for the same, and not thus stand trifling time.'

But *Isegrim*, half angry, answered, 'Your anger puts out the eye of your reason, yet had we a halter that would fit his neck, we should soon despatch him.'

30 *Reynard*, that had been silent a great while, said, 'I beseech you, shorten my pain; sir *Tibert* hath a cord strong enough, in which himself was hanged at

the priest's house ; besides, he can climb well and swift. O let him be mine executioner, for it neither becometh *Isegrim* nor *Bruin* thus to do to their nephew. I am sorry I live to see it ; but since you are set to be my hangmen, play your parts and delay not ; go before, *Bruin*, and lead my way ; follow, *Isegrim*, and beware I escape not.'

'You say well,' said *Bruin*, 'and it is the best counsel I have heard you give.'

So forth they went, and *Isegrim* and all his friends 10 guarded the fox, leading him by the neck and other parts of his body. When the fox felt this usage, he was dismayed, yet said, 'O why do you put yourself, my best kinsman, to this pain, to do me hurt ? Believe it, I could well ask your forgiveness, though my pains be pleasant unto you, yet well I know, did my aunt, your wife, understand of my trouble, she would for old affection's sake not see me thus tormented. But I am subject to your will, and can endure your worst malice ; as for *Bruin* and *Tibert*, I leave my 20 revenge to justice, and wish you the reward of traitors, if you do not to me the worst of your powers. I know my worst fortune, and death can come but once unto me ; I wish it were past already, for to me it is no terror ; I saw my father die, and how quickly he vanished, therefore the worst of death is familiar unto me.'

Then said *Isegrim*, 'Let us go, for his curse shall not light on me by delaying.' So he on one side, and *Bruin* on the other, led the poor fox to the gallows ; 30 *Tibert* running before with the halter, hoped to be revenged of his wrong formerly received. When they

were come to the place of execution, the King and Queen, and all the rest of the nobility, took their place to see the fox die. Then *Reynard*, full of sorrow, and busily bethinking himself how he might escape that danger, and how to enthrall and disgrace his proud enemies, and also how to draw the King on his party, said to himself, 'Though the King and many others be offended with me, as they have reason, for I have thoroughly deserved it, nevertheless, yet I 10 hope to live to be their best friend.'

During this meditation the wolf said, 'Sir *Bruin*, now remember your injuries, take your revenge in a full measure, for the day is come we wished for. *Tibert*, ascend quickly, and bring the rope to the gallows, making a running noose, for this day you shall have your will of your enemy: and good sir *Bruin*, take heed he escape not, whilst I myself raise up the ladder.'

When all things were prepared, the fox said, 'Now 20 may my heart be heavy, for death stands now in all his horror before me, and I cannot escape; my dread Lord the King, and you, my Sovereign Lady the Queen, and you, my lords, that stand to behold to see me die, I beseech you grant me this charitable boon, that I may unlock my heart before you, and clear my soul of her burdens, so that hereafter no man may be blamed for me; which done, my death will be easy.'

CHAPTER XI

How Reynard made his Confession before the King.

EVERY creature now took compassion on the fox, and said his request was small, beseeching the King to grant it, which was done; and then the fox thus spake: 'Help me, Heaven, for I see no man here whom I have not offended; yet was this evil no natural inclination in me, for in my youth I was accounted as virtuous as any breathing. This know, I have played with the lambs all the day long, and took delight in their pretty bleating, yet at last in my play I bit one, and the taste of their blood was 10 so sweet unto me that I approved the flesh, and both were so sweet that since I could never forbear it. This liquorish humour drew me into the woods amongst the goats, where hearing the bleating of the little kids, I slew one of them, and after, two more, which slaughter made me so hardy, that then I fell to murder hens, geese, and other poultry. And thus my crimes increased by custom, and fury so possessed me, that all was fish which came to my net. After 20 this, in the winter season, I met with *Isegrim*, where, as he lay hid under a hollow tree, he unfolded unto me how he was my uncle, and laid the pedigree down so plain, that from that day forth we became fellows and companions; that knot of friendship I may ever curse, for then began the flood of our thefts and slaughters. He stole the great things, I the small; he murdered nobles, I the mean subjects; and in

all our actions his share was still ever the greatest. When he got a ram, a calf, or wether, his fury would hardly afford me the horns to pick on. Nay, when he had an ox, or a cow, after himself, his wife, and his seven children were served, nothing remained to me but the bare bones to pick on. This I speak not in that I wanted (for it is well known I have more plate, jewels, and coin than twenty carts are able to carry), but only to show his ingratitude.'

10 When the King heard him speak of this infinite treasure and riches, his heart grew inflamed with a desire thereof, and he said, '*Reynard*, where is that treasure you speak of?'

The fox answered, 'My Lord, I shall willingly tell you, for it is true the wealth was stolen, and had it not been stolen in that manner which it was, it had cost your highness your life (which Heaven I beseech keep ever in their protection).'

20 When the Queen heard that dangerous speech, she started, and said, 'What dangers are these you speak of, *Reynard*? I do command you, upon your soul's health, to unfold these doubtful speeches, and to keep nothing concealed which concerns the life of my dread lord.'

The fox, with a sorrowful and sad countenance, replied to the Queen, 'O my dread Sovereign Lady, at what infinite ease were I, if I might die at this present! But, gracious Madam, your conjuration and the health of mine own soul so prevailleth with
30 me, that I will discharge my conscience, and yet speak nothing but what I will make good with the hazard of my life. It is true, the King should have

been pitilessly murdered by his own people, and I must confess by those of my dearest kindred, whom I am unwilling to accuse, did not the health of mine own soul and my fealty to the King command the contrary.'

The King, much perplexed at this discovery, said, 'Is this true, *Reynard*, which you protest?'

The fox answered, 'Alas, my dread Lord, you see the case wherein I stand, and how small a sand is left in my poor glass to run. Can your Majesty imagine I will now dissemble? What can the whole world avail me, when my soul perisheth?'

At that he trembled, and looked so pitifully, that the Queen had great compassion of him, and humbly besought the King, for the safety of his own royal person, to take some pity of the fox, and to command all his subjects to hold their peace, and keep silence till he had spoken the uttermost of his knowledge; all which was presently done, and the fox proceeded in this manner: 20

'Since it is the pleasure of my Sovereign Lord the King, and that his royal life lieth in the balance with my present death, I will freely and boldly unfold this capital and foul treason, and in the relation not spare any guilty person for any respect whatsoever, whether it be blood, greatness, or authority. Now then, my dread Sovereign Lord the King, that my father by a strange accident, digging in the ground, found out King *Ermerick's* treasure, being a mass infinite and innumerable; of which being possessed, 30 he grew so proud and haughty, that he held in scorn all the beasts of the wilderness, which before had

been his kinsmen and companions. At last he caused *Tibert* the cat to go into the vast forest of *Arden* to *Bruin* the bear, and to tender to him his homage and fealty, saying, "If it would please him to be king, he should come into *Flanders*, where he would show him means how to set the crown upon his head." *Bruin* was glad of this embassy (for he was exceeding ambitious, and had long thirsted for sovereignty), and thereupon came into *Flanders*, where my father
10 received him nobly. Then presently he sent for the wise *Grimbard*, my nephew, and for *Isegrim* the wolf, and for *Tibert* the cat; then these five coming between *Gaunt* and the village called *Elfe*, they held a solemn council for the space of a whole night, in which, by the assistance of the evil one, and the strong confidence of my father's riches, it was there concluded, that your Majesty should be forthwith murdered. And, to effect this, they took a solemn oath in this manner: the bear, my father, *Grimbard*, and the cat,
20 laying their hands on *Isegrim's* crown, swore, first to make *Bruin* their king, and to place him in the chair of estate at *Acon*, and to set the imperial diadem on his head; and if by any of your Majesty's blood and alliance they should be gainsaid, that then my father with his treasure should hire those which should utterly chase and root them out of the forest. Now after this determination held and finished, it happened that my nephew *Grimbard*, being on a time high flown with wine, he discovered this dread plot to
30 Dame *Slopecade* his wife, commanded her upon her life to keep secret the same. But she, forgetful of her charge, disclosed it in confession to my wife, as

they went a pilgrimage over an heath, with like conjuration of secrecy. But she, woman-like, contained it no longer than till she met with me, and gave me a full knowledge of all that had passed, yet so as by all means I must keep it secret too, for she had sworn by the three kings of *Cologne* never to disclose it. And withal she gave me such assurance by certain tokens, that I right well found all was true which she had spoken : insomuch that the very affright thereof made my hair stand upright, and my heart became 10 like lead, cold and heavy in my bosom.

Thus I sorrowed for your Majesty, although you little respect my grieving. I know that ambition of the bear, and his tyranny is so infinite great, that should the government come into his hands (as Heaven forbid) the whole commonwealth will be destroyed. Besides, I know your Majesty of so royal and princely birth, so mighty, so gracious, and so merciful, that it had been a horrible exchange to have seen a ravenous bear sit in the throne of the royal lion, for there is 20 in the bear and in his generation more prodigal looseness and inconstancy than in any beast whatsoever. But to proceed : from this sorrow I began to meditate how I might undo my father's false and wicked conspiracies, who sought to bring a base traitor and a slave into the throne imperial. For I well perceived as long as he held the treasure, there was a possibility of deposing your Majesty, and this troubled my thought exceedingly, so that I laboured how I might find out where my father's treasure was hid, and to 30 that end I watched and attended night and day in the woods, in the bushes, and in the open fields.

Nay, in all places wheresoever my father laid his eyes, there was I ever watching and attending.

‘ Now it happened on a time, as I was laid down flat on the ground, I saw my father come running out of a hole, and as soon as he was come out, he gazed round about him, to see if any discovered him. Then seeing the coast clear, he stopped the hole with sand, and made it so even, smooth, and plain, that no curious eye could discern a difference betwixt it and
10 the other earth. And where the print of his foot remained, that with his tail he stroked over, and with his mouth so smoothed, that no man might perceive it; and indeed that and many other subtilties I learned of him there at that instant. When he had thus finished, away he went towards the village about his private affairs; then went I presently towards the hole, and notwithstanding all his subtilty I quickly found it out. Then entered I the cave, where I found that innumerable quantity of treasure which
20 cannot be expressed. I took *Ermelin* my wife to help me, and we ceased not, day nor night, with infinite great toil and labour, to carry and convey away this treasure to another place much more convenient for us, where we laid it safe from the search of any creature.

‘ Now during the time that my wife and I were thus employed, my father was in consultation with the rest of the traitors, about the death of the King; in which consultation it was concluded that *Isagrim* the
30 wolf should travel over all the kingdom, and promise to all beasts that would take wages, and acknowledge *Bruin* for their sovereign, and defend his title, a full

year's pay beforehand. And in this journey my father accompanied him, carrying letters patent signed to that purpose, little suspecting that he was robbed of the wealth which should supply his treason. When this negotiation was finished between *Elve* and *Soame*, and a world of valiant soldiers raised against the beginning of the next spring, then they returned to *Bruin* and his consorts, to whom they declared the many perils they had escaped in the dukedom of *Saxony*, where they were pursued by huntsmen and 10 hounds, so as they hardly escaped with life. After this relation they showed *Bruin* their muster rolls, which pleased him exceeding much, for there was of *Isegrim's* lineage about twelve hundred sworn to the action, besides the bear's own kindred, the fox's, the cat's, and the dassen's, all which would be in readiness upon an hour's warning. All this I found out, I praise Heaven, by perfect intelligence; now things being brought to this perfection, my father went to his cave of treasure, but when he found it open, 20 spoiled, and ransacked, it is not in me to express the infinite agony and sorrow he fell into, that grief converting to madness, and madness to desperation, suddenly he went to the next tree and hanged himself.

'Thus by my art only was the treason of *Bruin* defeated, for which I now suffer; from hence sprang all misfortune, as thus: these foul traitors, *Bruin* and *Isegrim*, being of the King's privatest council, and sitting in high and great authority, tread upon me, poor *Reynard*, and work my disgrace; notwith- 30 standing, for your Majesty's sake. I have lost my natural father. O my dread Lord, what is he, or

who can tender you a better affection. thus to lose himself to save you ? ’

The King and Queen having great hope to get this inestimable treasure from *Reynard*. took him from the gibbet. and entreated him to unfold where this great treasure was.

But the fox replied, ‘ O my Lord, shall I make mine enemies my heirs ? shall these traitors which take away my life, and would devour yours, be
10 possessed of the good I enjoy ? No, that is a madness. I will never die guilty of.’

Then said the Queen, ‘ Fear not. *Reynard*, the King shall save your life, and grant you pardon, and you shall henceforth swear faith and true allegiance to his Majesty.’

The fox answered, ‘ Dearest Madam, if the King out of his royal nature will give credit to my truth, and forgive my former offences, there was never
King so rich as I will make him.’

20 Then the King staying the Queen, said, ‘ Madam, will you believe the fox ? know you not that it is his natural quality to lie, steal, and deceive ? ’

The Queen answered, ‘ My dear Lord, now you may boldly believe him, for howsoever in his prosperity he was full of errors, yet now you may see he is changed. Why, he spareth not to accuse his own father, nay, *Grimbard*, his dearest nephew and kinsman ; had he dissembled, he might have laid his imputations on other beasts, and not on those he
30 loveth most entirely.’

‘ Well, Madam,’ said the King, ‘ you shall at this time rule me, and all the offences of the fox I will

clearly pardon; yet with this protestation, that if ever again he offend in the smallest crime whatsoever, that not only himself, but his whole generation I will utterly root out of my dominions.'

The fox looked sadly when the King spake thus, but was inwardly most infinitely glad at his heart, and said, 'My dread Lord, it were a huge shame in me, should I speak any untruths in this great presence.'

Then the King taking a straw from the ground, 10 pardoned the fox of all his trespasses which either he or his father had ever committed. If the fox now began to smile, it was no wonder, the sweetness of life required it; yet he fell down before the King and Queen, and humbly thanked them for mercy, protesting that for that favour he would make them the richest princes in the world. And at these words the fox took up a straw, and proffered it unto the King, and said to him, 'My dread Lord, I beseech your Majesty to receive this pledge as a surrender 20 unto your Majesty of all the treasure that the great King *Ermerick* was master of, with which I freely infeoff you, out of my mere voluntary and free motion.'

At these words the King received the straw, and smiling, gave the fox great thanks for the same. But the fox laughed outright to think of the abuse; from that day forward no man's counsel prevailed with the King as the fox's, which the fox seeing, said to the King, 'My gracious Lord, you shall understand that 30 at the west side of *Flanders*, there standeth a wood called *Hustreløe*, near which runneth a river named

Crekenpit ; this is a wilderness so vast and impassable, that hardly in all the year there cometh either man or woman in the same. In it I have hid this treasure, whither I would have your Majesty and the Queen to go, for I know none but yourselves whom I dare trust in so great design ; and when your highness comes thither, you shall find two birchen trees growing by the pit, into which you shall enter, and there you shall find the treasure, which consisteth of coin, rich
 10 jewels, and the wealthy crown which King *Ermerick* wore. With this crown *Bruin* the bear should have been crowned, if his treason had succeeded according to his determination. There shall you see also many rich and costly precious stones, of which, when you are possessed, then remember the love of your servant *Reynard*.'

The King answered, ' Sir *Reynard*, you must yourself help me to dig for this treasure, for else I shall never find it. I have heard named *Paris*, *London*,
 20 *Aix*, and *Cologne*, but *Crekenpit* I never heard of, therefore, I fear, you dissemble.'

The fox blushed at those words, yet with a bold countenance he said, ' Is your Majesty so doubtful of my faith ? nay, then I will approve my words by public testimony ' ; and with that he called forth *Kyward* the hare from among the rest of the beasts, and commanded him to come before the King, charging him upon his faith and allegiance which he bore to the King and Queen, to answer truly to such
 30 questions as he should ask him.

The hare answered, ' I will speak truth in all things, though I were sure to die for the same.'

Then the fox said, 'Know you not where *Crekenpit* standeth ?'

'Yes,' said the hare, 'I have known it any time these dozen years; it standeth in a wood called *Hustreloe*, upon a vast and wide wilderness, where I have endured much torment both of hunger and cold.'

Then said the fox, 'My Sovereign Lord the King, what say you now to my relation—am I worthy your belief or no ?'

The King said, 'Yes, *Reynard*, and I beseech thee 10 excuse my jealousies, it was my ignorance which did thee evil: therefore forthwith make preparation that we may go to this pit where the treasure lieth.'

The fox answered, 'Alas, my Lord, do you imagine that I would not fain go with you? if it were so that I might go without your dishonour, which I cannot do; for you shall understand (though it be my disgrace) that when *Isegrim* the wolf, in the evil one's name, would needs grow religious and turn a monk, that then the permission of meat which was for six 20 monks, was too little for him alone. Whereupon he complained so pitifully unto me, that I, commiserating his case, being my kinsman, gave him counsel to run away, which he did. Whereupon I stand accursed, and excommunicated under the Pope's sentence, and am determined to-morrow, as soon as the sun riseth, to take my way towards *Rome* to be absolved, and from *Rome* I intend to cross the seas to the Holy Land, and will never return again to my native country, till I have done so much good, and satisfied 30 for my sins, that I may with honour and reputation attend on your highness's person.'

The King, hearing this, said, 'Since you stand accursed in the censures of the Church, I may not have you about me, and therefore I will, at this time take *Kyward* the hare, and some other with me to *Creckenpit*, and only command you, *Reynard*, as you respect my favour, to clear yourself of his holiness's curse.'

'My Lord,' said the fox, 'it is the only reason of my going to *Rome*; neither will I rest night nor day till I have gotten a full absolution.'

'The course you take is good,' said the King, 'go on and prosper in your intent and purpose.'

CHAPTER XII

How Reynard the Fox was honoured of all beasts by the King's commandment.

As soon as this conference was ended, the royal King mounted upon a high throne made in manner of a scaffold, made of fair squared stone, and then commanded a general silence amongst all his subjects, and that every one should take his place according to his birth, or dignity in office, only the fox was placed between the King and the Queen.

Then said the King, 'Hear, all you noblemen, knights, gentlemen, and others of inferior quality; this *Reynard*, one of the chief and supreme officers of my household, whose offences had brought him to the least reckoning of his life, as being in the hands of the law and justice, hath this day, in requital of these injuries, done that noble and worthy service to

the State that both myself and my Queen stand bound to render him our best grace and favour. Therefore know, that for divers things best known unto ourselves, we have freely given pardon to all his offences, and restored back to him whatsoever to us was confiscate; therefore, henceforth I command all of you, upon the pain and hazard of your dearest lives, that you fail not from this day forward to do all reverence and honour not only to *Reynard* himself, but also to his wife and children; whensoever or wheresoever you shall meet them, whether by night or by day. And let not any one hereafter be so audacious as to trouble mine ears with any more complaints of him; for his wickedness he hath cast behind him, and will no more be guilty of wrongdoing, which to effect the better, to-morrow very early he taketh his journey towards *Rome*, where from the Pope he will purchase a free pardon and indulgence for all his offences, and then will go on pilgrimage to the *Holy Land*.' 20

This speech, when *Tisellin* the raven heard, he flew to *Bruin*, *Isegrim*, and *Tibert*, and said, 'Wretched creatures, how are your fortunes changed! or how can you endure to hear these tidings? Why, *Reynard* is now a courtier, a counsellor, nay, the prime favourite; his offences are forgiven, and you are all betrayed, and sold unto bondage.'

Isegrim answered, 'It is impossible, *Tisellin*, nor can such a thing be suffered.'

'Do not deceive yourselves,' said the raven, 'for it is as true as that now I speak it.'

Then went the wolf and the bear to the King, but

the cat stayed. and was so sore affrighted with the news, that to purchase the fox's friendship again, he would not only have forgiven the evils received, but willingly have run into a second hazard. But now *Isegrim*, with great majesty and pride tracing over the fields, came before the King and Queen, and with most bitter and cruel words inveighed against the fox in such a passionate and impudent manner, that the King, being infinitely moved with displeasure, 10 caused the wolf and the bear to be presently arrested upon high treason; which suddenly was done with all violence and fury, and they were bound hand and foot so fast, that they could neither stir nor move from the place where they were couched.

Now when the fox had thus enthralled and entangled them, he so laboured with the Queen, that he got leave to have so much of the bear's skin as would make him a large scrip for his journey; which granted, he wanted nothing but a strong pair of shoes 20 to defend his feet from the stones in his travel; whereupon he said to the Queen, 'Madam, I am your pilgrim, and if it would please your Majesty but to take it into your consideration, you shall find that sir *Isegrim* hath a pair of shoon, excellent long-lasting ones, which would you vouchsafe to bestow upon me, I should pray for your Majesty's soul in all my travel, above any charitable devotion. Also mine aunt, Dame *Ereswine*, hath other two shoes, which would your Majesty bestow upon me, I should 30 be most infinitely bound to you, nor should you do to her any wrong, because she goes seldom abroad.'

The Queen replied, '*Reynard*, I can perceive how

you can want such shoes, for your journey is full of labour and difficulty, both in respect of the stony mountains and the gravelly ways, and therefore you shall have (though it touch their life never so nearly) from each of them a pair of shoes to accomplish and finish your journey.'

CHAPTER XIII

How Isegrim and his wife Ereswine had their shoes plucked off, for Reynard to wear to Rome.

AFTER the fox had made this petition, *Isegrim* was taken, and his shoes pulled off in most cruel and violent manner, so that all the veins and sinews lay naked, nor durst the poor massacred wolf either to complain or resist. After he had been thus tormented, then Dame *Ereswine* his wife was used on the same manner on her hinder feet, as her husband was on his forefeet; which the fox seeing, said to her in a scornful manner, 'Dear aunt, how much am I bound to you that take all this pains for my sake! Questionless, you shall be a sharer in my pilgrimage, and take part in the pardon I shall bring from beyond the seas by the help of your shoes.'

Then *Ereswine* (though speech were troublesome to her) said, 'Well, sir *Reynard*, you have your will accomplished, yet Heaven, I hope, will requite the misdoer.'

This she said, but her husband and the bear lay mute, for their wounds were grievous unto them; and surely had the cat been there also, he had not escaped

some extreme punishment. The next morning, very early, *Reynard*, causing his shoes to be well oiled, put them on, and made them as fit to his feet as they were to the wolves', and then went to the King and Queen, and said, 'My dread Lord and Lady, your poor subject voweth before your Majesties, humbly beseeching your highnesses to vouchsafe to deliver me my mail and my staff blessed, according to the custom due unto pilgrims.'

- 10 This said, the King sent for *Bellin* the ram, and commanded him to say solemn mass before the fox, and to deliver him his staff and his mail; but the ram refused, saying, 'My Lord, I dare not, for he hath confessed he is in the Pope's curse.'

And the King said, 'What of that? Have not our doctors told us, that if a man commit all the sins in the world, yet if he repent himself, be shriven, do penance, and walk as the priest shall instruct him, that all is clearly forgiven him? and hath not *Reynard* done all this?'

When the ram saw the King offended, he shook for fear, and ran presently to the altar, and sang mass, and used many ceremonies over the fox, who gave little respect unto them, more than the desire he had to enjoy the honour.

- Now when *Bellin* the ram had finished his orisons, he presently hung about *Reynard's* neck his mail, which was made of the bear's skin, and put into his right foot a palmer's staff; and thus being furnished
30 of all things, he looked sadly upon the King, as if he had been loath to depart, and feigned to weep (though sorrow and he were never farther asunder),

only his worst grief was, that all in that presence were not in the same case that the bear and the wolf were. Yet he took ~~his~~ leave of them, and desired every one to pray for him, as he would pray for them; and then offering to depart (for knowing his own knavery, he was very desirous to be gone).

The King said, 'Sir *Reynard*, I am sorry we must part thus suddenly.'

Then said the fox, 'There is no remedy, my Lord, nor ought I to be slow in so devout an action.' 10

Then the King took leave, and commanded all that were about him, but the bear and the wolf, to attend *Reynard* some part of his journey. O he that had seen how gallant and personable *Reynard* was, and how well his staff and his mail became him, as also how fit his shoes were for his feet, it could not have chosen but have stirred in him very much laughter. Yet the fox carried himself outwardly very demurely, however inwardly he smiled at the abuses he had cast amongst them, especially to see his 20 enemies now his attendants, and the King, whom he had most palpably wronged with false lies, aiding to all his vain desires, and accompanying him also as if he had been his companion.

But the fox being now started on his way, he said to the King, 'I beseech your Majesty trouble yourself no further, but in respect of your ease, and the danger might happen to your royal person, for you have arrested two capital traitors, who, if in your absence they should get at liberty, the danger were infinite 30 which might ensue thereon.'

And this said, he stood upon his hinder feet, and

entreated the beasts that were in his company, and would be partakers of his pardon, that they would pray for him; which done, he departed from the King with an exceeding sad and heavy countenance. Then turning to *Kyward* the hare, and *Bellin* the ram, he said with a smiling countenance, 'My best friends, shall we part thus soon? I know your loves will not leave me yet; with you two I was never offended, and your conversations are agreeable to my nature.
 10 For you are mild, loving, and courteous; religious, and full of wise counsel, even such as myself was when I was first a recluse; if you have a few green leaves, or a little grass, you are well content as with all the bread and flesh in the world, and you are temperate and modest.'

And thus with a world of such like flattering words he enticed these two, that they were content to go along with him.

CHAPTER XIV

How Kyward the Hare was slain by Reynard the Fox, and sent by the Ram to the King.

THUS marched these three together, and when *Reynard*
 20 was come to the gates of his own house he said to *Bellin*, 'Cousin, I will entreat you to stay here without a little, whilst I and *Kyward* go in, for I would have him a witness to some private passages betwixt me and my wife.'

Bellin was well content, and so the fox and the hare went into *Malepardus*, where they found Dame *Ermelin* lying on the ground with her younglings about



her, who had sorrowed exceedingly for the loss and danger of her husband ; but when she saw his return, her joy was ten times doubled. But beholding his mail, his staff, and his shoes, she grew into great admiration, and said, ' Dear husband, how have you fared ? ' to whom he delivered from point to point all that had passed with him at the King's court, as well his danger as release, and that now he was to go a pilgrimage, having left *Bruin* and *Isegrim* two
10 pledges for him till his return.

As for *Kyward*, he said the King had bestowed him upon them, to do with him what they pleased, affirming that *Kyward* was the first that had complained of him, for which, questionless, he vowed to be sharply revenged.

When *Kyward* heard these words he was much appalled, and would fain have fled away, but he could not ; for the fox had got between him and the gate, who presently seized the hare by the neck, at which
20 the hare cried unto *Bellin* for help, but could not be heard, for the fox in a trice had torn out his throat ; which done, he, his wife, and young ones feasted therewith merrily, eating the flesh, and drinking the blood to the King's health.

All this while stood *Bellin* the ram at the gate, and grew exceeding angry both against the fox and the hare, that they made him wait so long ; and therefore called out aloud for *Reynard* to come away, which, when *Reynard* heard, he went forth, and said softly
30 to the ram, ' Good *Bellin*, be not offended, for *Kyward* is in earnest conference with his dearest aunt, and entreated me to say unto you, that if you would please

to walk before, he would speedily overtake you, for he is light of foot, and speedier than you; nor will his aunt part with him thus suddenly, for she and her children are much perplexed at my departure.'

'Ay, but,' quoth *Bellin*, 'methought I heard *Kyward* cry for help.'

'How, cry for help? Can you imagine he shall receive hurt in my house? Far be such a thought from you; but I will tell you the reason. As soon as we were come into my house, and that *Ermelin* my wife understood of my pilgrimage, presently she fell down in a swoon, which, when *Kyward* saw, he cried aloud, "O *Bellin*, come, help my aunt, she dies, she dies!"'

Then said the ram, 'In sadness I mistook the cry, and thought the hare had been in danger.'

'It was your too much care of him,' said the fox, 'but before he should have any injury in my house, I would leave to respect either wife or children. But letting this discourse pass, you remember, *Bellin*, that yesterday the King and his council commanded me, that before I departed from the land, I should send unto him two letters, which I have made ready, and will entreat you, my dearest cousin, to bear them to his Majesty.'

The ram answered, 'I would willingly do you the service if there be nothing but honourable matter contained in your letters; but I am unprovided of anything to carry them in.'

The fox said, 'That is provided for you already, so for you shall have my mail which you may conveniently hang about your neck; I know they will

be thankfully received of his Majesty, for they contain matter of great importance.'

Then *Bellin* promised to carry them; so the fox returned into his house, and took the mail, and put therein the head of *Kyward*, and brought it to the ram, and gave him a great charge not to look therein till it was presented to the King, as he did expect the King's favour; and that he might further endear himself with his Majesty, he bade the ram take upon
10 him the inditing of the letters, 'which will be so pleasing to the King, that questionless he will pour upon you many favours.'

The ram was exceeding glad of this advice, and thanked the fox, saying, 'That the favours he did him should not die unrequited; and I know it will be much to mine honour when the King shall think I am able to indite with so great perfection; for I know there be many in these days as ignorant as myself that are risen to high promotion, only by taking upon
20 them the worth of other men's labours; and therefore, why may not I run the same course also? Yet I pray you, *Reynard*, further advise me: is it meet that I take *Kyward* the hare along with me?'

'O by no means,' said the fox; 'let him come after you, for I know his aunt will not yet part with him. Besides, I have other secret things to impart to him, which may not yet be revealed.'

This said, *Bellin* took leave of the fox and went toward the court, in which journey he made such
30 speed that he came thither before noon, where he found the King in his palace sitting amongst the nobility.

The King wondered when he saw the ram come in with the mail which was made of the bear's skin, and said, 'Where comest thou, *Bellin*, and where is the fox, that you have that mail about you ?'

Bellin answered, 'My dread Lord, I attended the noble fox to his house, where, after some repose, he desired me to bear certain letters to your Majesty of infinite great importance, to which I easily consented. Whereupon he delivered me the letters enclosed in this mail, which letters myself had formerly indited, 10 and I doubt not but are such as will give your highness both contentment and satisfaction.'

Presently he commanded the letters to be delivered to *Bocart*, his secretary, who was an excellent linguist, and understood all languages, that he might read them publicly ; so he and *Tibert* the cat took the mail from *Bellin's* neck, and opening the same, instead of letters they drew out the head of *Kyward* the hare, at which, being amazed, they said, 'Woe, and alas, what letters call you these ? Believe me, my dread Lord, here is 20 nothing but the head of poor murdered *Kyward*.'

Which the King seeing, he said, 'Alas, how unfortunate was I to believe the traitorous fox ?'

And with that, being oppressed with anger, grief, and shame, he held down his head for a good space, and so did the Queen also ; but in the end, shaking his curled locks, he groaned out such a dreadful noise, that all the beasts of the forest did tremble to hear it.

Then spake sir *Firapell* the leopard, who was the King's nearest kinsman, and said, 'Why is your 30 Majesty thus vexed in heart ? This sorrow might serve for the Queen's funeral. I do beseech you, assuage

your anguish : are not you King and master of this country, and are not all things subject to your power ?’

The King replied, ‘Cousin, this is a mischief beyond endurance ; I am betrayed by a base villain, and a traitor, and have been made to wrong and abuse my best friends and subjects, even those of my blood, and nearest counsel. I mean the stout *Bruin*, and valiant *Isegrim*, whose wrongs speak loud to my dishonour, yet in myself I found an unwillingness thereto, only
10 my Queen’s pity working upon the easiness of my belief, hath made me guilty of that which will evermore grieve me.’

‘Why,’ said the leopard, ‘what of all this ? You are above your injuries, and with one smile can salve the greatest wound that can be made in honour ; you have power to recompense, and what reputation is it that reward will not sawder ? As for the bear which lost his skin, the wolf, and his wife, Dame *Ereswine*, that lost their shoes, you may in recom-
20 pense (since *Bellin* hath confessed himself a party in this foul murder) bestow him and his substance on the parties grieved ; as for *Reynard*, we will go and besiege his castle, and having arrested his person, hang him up by the law of arms without further trial.’

CHAPTER XV

How Bellin the Ram and his lineage were given to the Bear and the Wolf.

To this motion of the leopard the King consented, so that *Firapell* forthwith went to the prison, where



the bear and the wolf were, and said, 'My lords, I bring a free and general pardon from the King, with his love and a recognition of your injuries, which to recompense in some large manner out of his princely bounty, he is pleased to bestow upon you both *Bellin* the ram and his whole generation, with whatsoever they possess, and is now confiscate to his Majesty, to hold from henceforth to you and yours till doomsday; with full commission to slay, kill, and devour them
10 wheresoever you find them, be it in woods, fields, or mountains. And also the King granted unto you full power to hunt, kill, or wound *Reynard* the fox wheresoever you find him or any of his lineage or generation; and of this great privilege you shall receive letters patent at your pleasure, with only a reservation of your fealty and homage to be due to his Majesty, which I advise you to accept, for it will redound much to your honours.'

Thus was the peace made between the King and
20 these nobles by the leopard, and *Bellin* the ram was forthwith slain by them; and all these privileges doth the wolf hold to this hour, nor could ever any reconciliation be made between them and the ram's kindred. When this peace was thus finished, the King, for joy thereof, proclaimed a feast to be held for twelve days after, which was done with all solemnity.

To this feast came all manner of wild beasts, for it was universally known through the whole kingdom,
30 nor was there wanting any delight or pleasure that could be imagined, as music, dancing, masking, and all princely recreations; as for several meats, they

were in that abundance, that the court seemed a storehouse which could not be emptied. Also to this feast resorted abundance of feathered fowl, and all other creatures that held peace with his Majesty, and no one missing but the fox only.

Now after this feast had thus continued in all pomp the space of eight days, about high noon came *Laprell* the coney before the King and Queen, as they sat at dinner, and with a heavy and lamentable voice said, 'My gracious and great Lord, have pity upon my 10 misery, and attend my complaint, which is of great violence, force, and murder, which *Reynard* the fox would yesterday have committed against me. As I passed by the castle of *Malepardus*, where, standing without his gates, attired like a pilgrim. I supposing to pass peaceably by him towards my nest, he crossed my way, saying his beads so devoutly, that I saluted him; but he, returning no answer, stretched forth his right foot and gave me such a blow on the neck between the head and shoulders, that I imagined my head had 20 been stricken from my body; but yet so much memory was left me that I leaped from his claws, though most grievously hurt and wounded. At this he grieved extremely, because I escaped; only of one of my ears he utterly deprived me, which I beseech your Majesty in your royal nature to pity, and that this bloody murderer may not live thus to afflict your poor subjects.'

Now whilst the coney was thus speaking to the King, there came flying into the court *Corbaut* the 30 rook, who, coming before the King, said, 'Great King, I beseech you, vouchsafe to hear me, and pity

the complaint I shall utter. So it is, that I went this morning with *Sharpbeak* my wife to recreate ourselves on the heath, and there we found *Reynard* the fox laid on the ground like a dead carcass, his eyes staring, his tongue lolling out of his mouth, like a dead hound. so that we, wondering at his strange plight, began to feel and touch his body, but found no life therein at all. Then went my wife (poor careful soul), laid her head to his mouth, to see if he drew any breath,
10 which she had no sooner done, but the foul murderer, awaiting his time, snatched her head into his mouth, and bit it quite off. At that I shrieked out and cried, "Woe is me, what misfortunes are these?"

But presently the murderer started up, and reached at me with such a bloody intent, that with much trembling and anguish I was fain to fly up to a tree, where I saw him devour my wife in such terrible manner, that the very thought is death to me in the repeating.

20 'This massacre finished, the murderer departed, and I went to the place and gathered the feathers of my lost wife, which here I humbly present before your Majesty, beseeching you to do me justice, and in such manner to revenge mine injury, that the world may speak fame of your great excellence.'

CHAPTER XVI

How the King was angry at these complaints, took counsel for revenge, and how Reynard was forewarned by Grimbard the Brock.

THE royal King was much moved with anger when he heard these complaints both of the coney and the rook, so that his eyes darted out fire amongst the beams of majesty; his countenance was dreadful and cruel to look on, and the whole court trembled to behold him. In the end he said, 'By my crown and the truth I evermore reverence and owe unto the Queen my wife, I will so revenge these outrages committed against my crown and dignity, that goodness shall adore me, and the wicked shall die with the 10 remembrance; his falsehood and flattery shall no more get belief in me. Is this his journey to *Rome* and to the *Holy Land*? Are these the fruits of his mail, his staff, and other ornaments becoming a devout pilgrim? Well, he shall find the reward of his treasons; but it was not my belief, but the persuasion of my Queen; nor am I the first that hath been deceived by that soft gender, since many great spirits have fallen through their enticements.'

This said, he commanded all that were about him, 20 all noble, worthy, and very discreet spirits, to assist him with their counsel, and to lay him down such sure ground for his revenge, that his honour and royalty might be anew revived, and every offender made to know and feel the heavy price for their most unjust actions.

Isegrim the wolf and *Brnin* the bear, hearing the King's words, were wonderfully well repaid, and doubted not but now to gain their full revenge against *Reynard*; yet still they kept silence and spake not a word.

But the Queen, after solemn reverence, said to the King, '*Mon Sire, pour Dieu croyez mie toutes choses qu'on vous dira, et ne jurez point légèrement.* Sir, to hear the other party is the act of perfect justice. For
10 my own part, howsoever I have erred, yet I have strong ground for my persuasion, and whether *Reynard* be good or bad, yet it stands with your Excellency not to proceed against him but by the true form of your laws; for he hath no power to escape you, but must obey whatsoever your severity can impose upon him.'

When the Queen had thus spoken, *Firapell* the leopard, to second her entreaty, said, 'My Lord, the Queen hath spoken graciously, and I see not wherein
20 your Majesty can stray from her judgment; therefore let him take the due trial of your laws, and being found guilty of the trespasses whereof he is accused, let him be summoned, and if he appear not before your feast be ended, to clear himself, or submit to your mercy, then may your Highness proceed against him as it shall seem best to your pleasure.'

To this speech *Isegrim* the wolf replied, 'Sir *Firapell*, for my own part, I think not any in this assembly will dissent from your counsel, so it may stand with the
30 pleasure of my Lord the King. But, touching the treasure of which he hath informed his Majesty to lie at *Creckenpit* in *Hustreloe*, there never came a falser

information from the mouth of any creature ; for it was a lie made out of malice to wrong me and the bear, and get himself liberty to rob and spoil all that pass by his house as now he doth ; but, notwithstanding, I hold it meet that all things be done as shall seem good to his Majesty, or you, sir *Firapell*. Yet this believe, that if he had meant to have appeared, he had been here long since, for he hath had summons given him by the King's messenger.'

To this the King answered, ' I will have no other 10 course of summoning him, but command all that owe me allegiance, or respect mine honour, that forthwith they make themselves ready for the war ; and at the end of six days appear before me with their bows, guns, bumbards, pikes, and halberds ; some on horse-back, some on foot, for I will besiege *Malepardus* instantly, and destroy *Reynard* and his generation from the earth for ever ; this if any dislike, let him turn his back, that I may know him for mine enemy.'

And they all cried with one voice, ' We are ready to 20 attend your Majesty.'

When *Grimbard* the brock heard this determination he grew exceeding sorry, and stealing from the rest of the company, he ran with all speed possible to *Malepardus*, neither sparing bush nor brier, pale nor rail ; and as he went he said to himself, ' Alas, my dear uncle *Reynard*, into what hazards art thou drawn, having but one step betwixt thee and thy death, or at the best thine everlasting banishment ? Well may I grieve for thee, since thou art the top and 30 honour of my house, art wise and politic, and a friend to thy friends, when they stand in need of thy counsel,

for with thy sweet language thou canst enchant all creatures ; but all is now bootless.’

With such manner of lamentations, as these, came *Grimbard* unto *Malepardus*, and found his uncle *Reynard* standing at the castle gates, who had newly gotten two young pigeons as they came creeping out of their nest to try how they could learn to fly. But now beholding his nephew *Grimbard*, he stayed, and said, ‘Welcome, my best beloved nephew, the only
10 one I esteem above all my kindred ; surely you have
run exceeding fast, for you are wonderfully hot ; what
news, man, how run the squares at the court ?’

‘Oh,’ said *Grimbard*, ‘exceeding ill with you, for you have forfeited both your life, honour, and estate. The King is up in arms against you with horsemen, footmen, and soldiers innumerable ; besides, *Isegrim* and *Bruin* are now in more favour with his Majesty than I am with you ; therefore it is high time you have great care of yourself, for their envy hath
20 touched you to the quick ; they have informed against you, that you are a thief and a murderer ; and to second their informations, *Laprell* the coney and *Corbaut* the rook have made heinous complaints against you, so that but your shameful death, I see no escape or freedom.’

‘Tush,’ said the fox, ‘my dear nephew, if this be the worst, let no sorrow affright you ; but let us be cheerful and pleasant together, for though the King and all the court would swear my death, yet will I
30 be exalted above them all. Well may they prate and jangle, and tire themselves with their counsels ; but without the help of my wit and policy, neither can

the court nor commonwealth have any long continuance. Come, then, my best nephew, let us enter into my castle and feast; I have here a pair of fat pigeons for you, which are meat of pure and light digestion; I love not anything better; they are young and tender, and may be almost swallowed whole, for their bones are little other than blood. Yet come, I say, my wife *Ermelin* will receive you kindly; but by all means report not to her of any dangers, for she is of soft and melting temper, and it might strike her into sudden sickness, for women are apt to entertain grief. When we have feasted, I will then to-morrow early in the morning go with you to the court, and if I can but obtain speech with the King, I shall gall some deep enough; only this I desire, dear nephew, at your hands, that you will stand to me, as one friend and kinsman ought to do to another.'

'Doubt me not,' said *Grimbard*, 'for both my life and goods shall be at your service.' 20

'I thank you, nephew,' said the fox, 'and you shall not find me ungrateful.'

'Sir,' said the brock, 'be bold of this, that you shall come and make your answer before the lords freely, for none shall dare to arrest or hold you, for that favour the Queen and the leopard have purchased from the King.'

'I am glad of that,' said the fox, 'nor care I then a hair for their worst malice.'

And this said, they went into *Malepardus*, and 30 found *Ermelin* sitting among her younglings, who presently arose, and received the brock with all

reverence, and he on the other part saluted her and her children with all courtesy. Presently the two pigeons were made ready, and they ~~stopped~~ ^{supped} together, each taking their part, though none had so much as they desired.

CHAPTER XVII

How the Fox came to Court, accompanied by the Brock.

‘I KNOW, nephew,’ said the fox, ‘your journey hath made you weary, therefore you shall go to your rest’; to which the brock consented, so they laid them down upon straw litter, and all slept soundly but the fox, 10 whose heart was heavy with sorrow, and he lay studying how he might best excuse himself before the King.

But as soon as the morning began to rise from the tops of the mountains, he arose and went with *Grimbard* towards the court; yet before he went, he took leave of his wife and children, and said, ‘Think not mine absence long, dear wife and children, for I must go to the court with my cousin *Grimbard*, and though my stay be more than ordinary, yet take no affright 20 thereat, and what tidings soever you hear, yet consider all things for the best, and be careful of yourselves, and keep my castle close and well guarded; as for myself, doubt not but I will defeat all mine enemies.’

‘Alas, *Reynard*,’ said his wife, ‘what moves you to take this sudden journey? The last time you were at the court you know what dangers you escaped,

and you vowed never to see it again. Will you now run a second hazard ? ’

‘ Dame,’ said the fox, ‘ the occurrences of the world are divers and uncertain, and we are subject to the strokes of fortune ; but rest you content, there is necessity that I go, and I hope my stay shall not be above five days at the uttermost ’ ; and so embracing his wife and children, he took leave and departed.

As they held on their journey towards the court, 10 the fox’s heart, for all his fair show, was sad and heavy, yet his countenance betrayed it not ; but he passed without amazement through all the press of the court, even till he came to the presence of the King, and the brock marched close by his side, saying, ‘ Uncle, be not afraid, but be of good cheer ; it is courage of whom fortune is ever enamoured.’

‘ Then,’ said the fox, ‘ nephew, you say true, and your comfort avails me.’

And so on he went, casting a disdainful countenance 20 on those he liked not ; or as one would say, Here I am, what is it that the proudest of you dare object against me ? He beheld there many of his kin which he knew loved him not, as the *Otter*, the *Beaver*, and divers others which I will name hereafter ; and many he saw which loved him. As soon as he was come in the view of the King, he fell down humbly on his knee, and spake as followeth.

CHAPTER XVIII

How Reynard the Fox excused himself before the King, and of the King's answer.

'MY Sovereign Lord the King, it is but justice that you hear me answer my accusations, for were my faults more heinous than envy can make them, yet equity gives the accused leave ever to answer. I have with my counsel done you service in former times, and may no less still. I have never started from your Majesties, but walked by your side when others have gone from your presence; if then mine enemies with their slander shall prevail against me, 10 blame me not to complain.

'I see here divers of my kindred and friends which now make no value of me, whom I can prove go about to deprive you of the best servant you possess. Can your Majesty imagine if I had been guilty in the least imagined crime that I would thus voluntarily have made my appearance even in the throng of mine enemies? Oh, it had been too much indiscretion. But Heaven be thanked I know mine innocence, and dare confront my worst enemy.

20 'Yet when my kinsman *Grimbard* first brought me the tidings, I must confess I was half distracted with anger, and had I not been in the censure of his church, I had appeared ere they had left complaining, but that detained me. And I wandered with sorrow on the heath, till I met with my uncle *Martin*, the ape, who far exceedeth any priest in pastoral business,

and seeing me in this great agony of heart, he said, "Dear cousin, why are you thus heavy in spirit, and why is your countenance dejected? Grief is easy to carry when the burden is divided amongst friends: for the nature of a true friend is to behold and relieve that which anguish will not suffer the oppressed to see or suffer."

'Then I answered him, "You say true, dear uncle, and the like is my fortune, for sorrow is without cause laid upon me, and of that I am not guilty; I 10 am accused by those I ranked with my best friends: as namely, the coney, who came yesterday to my house as I was saying *Matins*, saying he was travelling towards the court, but was at that time both hungry and weary, and therefore requested of me some meat. I willingly consented, took him in and gave him a couple of manchets and sweet butter, for it was on Wednesday, on which day I never eat flesh.

' "Now when he had almost well refreshed himself, my youngest son *Rossel* came in and offered to take 20 away what he had left, for you know the nature of children is ever to be eating and craving; but presently the coney smote *Rossel* on the mouth, that his teeth bled, and the poor fool fell down almost in a swoon, which when *Reynardine*, my eldest son, beheld, he forthwith leaped to the coney, and caught him by the head, and questionless had slain him, had I not come to the rescue. Which done, I went and gave my son correction for his fault. But presently *Laprell* the coney posted to my Lord the King, and gave 30 information that myself sought means to murder him.

' "But not long after came *Corbaut* the rook

flying to my house with a sad noise. And demanding what he ailed ? he answered, ‘ Alas, my wife is dead.’ I craved the cause ; he said, ‘ A dead hare lying on the heath full of maggots and vermin, of which she had eaten so much, that the worms had gnawed her throat in sunder ’ ; and without speaking to me any more words, away he flew, leaving me much amazed ; and now reports that I slew his wife, which how could I by any possible means do, considering she flieth in
 10 the air and I walk afoot on the ground ? Thus, dear uncle, you see how I am slandered, but it may be it is for my old sins, and therefore I bear it with more patience.”

‘ Then said the ape to me, “ Nephew, you shall go to the court and disprove their falsehoods.” “ Alas, uncle,” quoth I, “ it cannot be, for the archdeacon hath put me in the Pope’s curse, because I gave counsel to the wolf to forsake his holy orders, when he complained to me of his unability to endure that
 20 strict life and much fasting ; of which act I now much repent me, since he repayeth my love with nothing but hatred and malice, and with all the slanders he can invent, stirreth his Majesty daily against me. These things, dear uncle, bring me to my wits’ end, for of necessity I must go to *Rome* for absolution ; and in mine absence, what injury may happen to my wife and children through the malice of these bloody wretches, any one may guess. Whereas, on the other part, were I free of the Pope’s curse, then I could go
 30 to the court, and plead mine own cause, and turn their malice into their own bosoms.”

‘ Then said the ape, “ Cousin, cast off your sorrow,

for I know the way to *Rome* well, and am experienced in these businesses, for I am called the bishop's clerk; therefore I will go thither, and enter a plea against the archdeacon, and in spite of his will, bring you from the Pope a well-sealed absolution.

“Tut, man, I have many great friends there, all which will stand unto me. A true friend is tried in necessity, and you shall find me without dissembling; therefore cast off your grief, and go to the court as soon as you can, for I will presently to *Rome*, and in 10 the meantime, here I quit you of all your sins and offences, and only put them upon myself.

“When you come to the court you shall find there Dame *Rukenaw* my wife, her two sisters, and my three children, with divers others of our family. I pray you salute them from me; my wife is exceeding wise, and she shall find that her distressed friends shall not shrink when I can help them. I know she is faithful, and as behoves her will never leave her friend in danger. At the uttermost, if your 20 oppression be more than you can bear, send presently to me to *Rome*, and not an enemy that you have, be it king or queen, or subject, even from the highest to the lowest, but I will presently put them in the Pope's curse, and send back such an interdiction, that no holy or sacred duty shall be performed till you have right and justice restored you.

“Therefore, cousin, go boldly to the King, and charge him to do you justice, which I know he will, since he understands the laws are made for the use 30 of all men.”

‘This, my Sovereign Lord the King, when I heard

him speak I smiled. and with great joy came hither to relate unto you the truth ; therefore, if there be any creature within this court that can charge me with any trespass whatsoever, and prove it by testimony as the law requireth, or if otherwise, he will oppose himself against me, person to person, grant me but a day, and equal lists, and in combat I will maintain my innocence against him, provided he be equal to me in birth and degree ; this law hath ever hitherto
10 stood constant, and I hope neither in me, for me, or by me, it shall now be broken.'

When all the assembly of beasts heard this, they were dumb and amazed to behold his stoutness. As for the coney and the rook, they were so scared they durst not speak, but privately stole away out of the court, and being far on the plain, they said, ' This evil murderer hath such art in his falsehood, that no truth can look with better countenance, which only ourselves know ; but having no other witness, there-
20 fore it is better we depart than try combat with him, which is so much too strong for us ' ; and so away they went.

Isegrim the wolf, and *Bruin* the bear, were very sad when they saw these two forsake the court ; whereupon the King said, ' If any will appeal the fox, let him come forth, and he shall be heard ; yesterday we were laden with complaints, where are they to-day ? Here is the fox ready to answer.'

Then said the fox, ' My Sovereign Lord, absence
30 makes impudent accusers when presence daunts them, as your highness may see both by the coney and the rook. Oh, what it is to trust the malice of these

cowards, and how soon they may confound good men ; but for me it matters not ; nevertheless, had they, at your Majesty's commandment, but asked me forgiveness, I had quickly cast all their offences behind me, for I will ever shake hands with charity, and not hate or complain of mine enemies ; my revenge I leave to Heaven, and justice to your Majesties.'

Then said the King, '*Reynard*, you speak well, if the inward heart be like the outward show, yet I fear your grief is not such as you express it.'

10

'It far surmounts it,' said the fox.

'No,' quoth the King, 'for I must charge you with one foul treason, which is, when I had pardoned all your great transgressions, and you had promised me to go a pilgrimage to the *Holy Land* ; when I had furnished you with mail, state, and all things fitting that holy order ; then in the greatest despite you sent me back in the mail by *Bellin* the ram the head of *Kyward* the hare, a thing so notoriously to my disgrace and dishonour, that no treason can be fouler. 20 This you have no colour to deny, for *Bellin*, our chaplain, at his death revealed the whole process, and the same reward which he then gained, the same you shall receive, or else right shall fail me.'

At this sentence *Reynard* grew so sore afraid that he knew not what to say, but looked with a pitiable countenance upon all his kindred which stood round about him ; his colour went and came, and his heart fainted, but none lent him either hand or foot to help him.

30

Then the King said, 'Thou dissembling and false traitor, why art thou now dumb ?'

But the fox, being full of anguish, fetched a sigh as if his heart would have broken, so that every beast pitied him, save only the bear and the wolf, who much rejoiced to behold his sorrow.

CHAPTER XIX

How Dame Rukenaw answered for the Fox to the King.

DAME *Rukenaw* the she ape, being aunt unto *Reynard*, and a great favourite of the Queen, was much grieved when she saw this distraction; and it was well for the fox that she was in the presence, for she was exceeding wise, and durst boldly speak; and there-
10 fore rising up, after reverence done, she said, 'My Lord the King, you ought not to be possessed with anger when you sit in judgment, for it becometh not nobility to be void of reason; for my own part, I think I know the laws as well as some which wear furred gowns, for I have read many, and put some in use. I talk not beyond mine experience.

'Princes are bound to do justice to all men, nor may the law waver or halt with any partiality. I do not think but if every man which standeth here
20 should call to account all the actions of his life, he could not choose but pity much the state of my poor kinsman *Reynard*, and therefore I wish every one to know himself, for none so sure but they may fall, and for him that never erred, he is so good that he needeth no amendment.

'This counsel would some take to their hearts, the

day would not appear so dark as it doth to my cousin *Reynard*. It is well known that both his grandfather and father ever bore greater reputation in this court than either *Bruin* or *Isegrim*, or their whole generations. Alas! when have their counsels or wisdoms been worthy to have held comparison with those of my cousin *Reynard's*? Why, the court is turned topsy-turvy by his absence; the evil are now advanced and the good suppressed; but how this can long endure I see not, since the end of their labour is but the ruin of your Majesty.'

To this speech the King made this answer: 'Dame, had the fox done that offence to you that he hath done to others, your excuse would couch in another nature; you cannot blame me to hate him, since it is only he which breaketh my laws and covenants. You have heard him accused of theft, murder, and treason, how can you then defend him? If you will needs make him your saint, then set him upon the altar and do him worship; but believe it, there is no one thing good in him; and however you imagine, yet search him and you shall find him rotten and deformed. There is neither kinsman nor friend but yourself that will assist him, and therefore your violence draws my greater wonder. What companion hath he that ever thrived by his society, or whom hath he smiled on, that his tail hath not afterwards dashed out the eye of?' • •

To this the she ape replied: 'Your Majesty says his kindred are all fallen from him; would any but your highness had affirmed it; you should then have seen there could not be a thing of greater falsehood.'

But your grace may say your pleasure, nor will I in any word oppose you.

‘It is known we dare fight, nor are we descended of any base generation; your highness may call to mind the worth of our pedigree, and how dearly from time to time they have respected him, willing ever to lay down their lives and goods for the safety of their noble kinsman *Reynard*. For mine own part I am one myself, and albeit I am the wife of another, 10 yet for him I would not stick to spend my dearest blood. Besides, I have three full-grown children, which are known valiant and strong in arms, yet for his sake I would adventure them all to the uttermost peril.’

With that she called them forth unto her, and said, ‘Come, my dear children, and stand with your kinsman the noble *Reynard*, and with you come all the rest of our ancient family, and be all petitioners to the King, that he would do to *Reynard* the equity of 20 his laws and kingdom.’

Then presently came forth a world of other beasts, as the squirrel and the ferret; for those love poultry as well as *Reynard* doth. Then came the otter and *Pantecrote* his wife, which I had almost forgotten, because in former time they had taken part with the bear against the fox, but now they dare not but obey Dame *Rukenaw*, for they stood in awe of her wisdom and greatness; and with these came above twenty other beasts for her sake and stood by *Reynard*. Then 30 came also Dame *Atrot* and her two sisters, the weasel and ermine, the ass, the sow, the water-rat, and many others, to the number almost of a hundred, and stood

by *Reynard* with such affection, as if his trouble did equally concern them.

Then said the ape, 'My Lord the King, now you may see that my kinsman hath friends which dare avow him, and we are your true and loyal subjects, which will never fail to do you faithful service. Therefore, let us with one voice beg of your Majesty, that *Reynard* may have justice; and if he be not able to disprove his adversaries, and clear the crimes imputed against him, let the law pass, for we will not murmur 10 to see his destruction.'

Then said the Queen to *Rukenaw*, 'Thus much I told unto his Majesty yesterday, but his anger was so great he would not give ear to me.'

Also the leopard said, 'Sire, you must judge according to witness, for to be governed by will is tyrannous and ignoble.'

Then answered the King, 'It is true you inform me; but the disgrace done to my particular self in *Kyward's* death and other informations so robbed me 20 of patience, that I had no leisure to look back either to law or reason. Therefore, now let the fox speak boldly, and if he can justly acquit himself of the crimes laid against him, I shall gladly restore him his liberty, and the rather for you his dear friends' sake, whom I have ever found faithful and loyal.'

Oh, how infinitely glad was the fox when he heard these words, and said in himself, 'Thanks, my noble aunt, a thousand times, thou hast put me new blossoms on my dried roses, and set me in a fair path 30 to liberty. I have one good foot to dance on; and I doubt not but to use my art of dissimulation so

bravely, that this day shall be remembered for my renown and victory.'

CHAPTER XX

How Reynard excused himself of Kyward's death, got the King's favour, and made a relation of certain Jewels.

THEN spake *Reynard* the fox to the King, and said, 'Alas, my Sovereign Lord, what is that you said? Is good *Kyward* the hare dead? Oh where is then *Bellin* the ram, or what did he bring to your Majesty at his return? For it is certain I delivered him three rich and inestimable jewels, I would not for the wealth of *India* they should be detained from you; the chief
10 of them I determined for you my Lord the King, and the other two for my Sovereign Lady the Queen.'

'But,' said the King, 'I received nothing but the head of poor murdered *Kyward*, for which I executed the ram, having confessed the deed to be done by his advice and counsel.'

'Is this true?' said the fox; 'then woe is me that ever I was born, for there are lost the goodliest jewels that ever were in the possession of any prince living; would I had died when you were thus defrauded; for I know it will be the death of my wife,
20 nor will she ever henceforth esteem me.'

Then said the she ape, 'Dear nephew, why should you sorrow thus for transitory wealth? Let them go. Whosoever detains them shall be cursed in all parishes till he restore them to the King's Majesty.'

'O aunt,' said the fox, 'do not persuade yourself

so, for whosoever hath them will not restore them to gain an empire, they are so goodly and precious ; yet your words do something appease me. But whom shall we trust in this corrupt age, when even sanctity itself walks masked and mistaken ? ’

And then fetching a deep sigh, with which he gilded his dissimulation, he proceeded on and said, ‘ Because the jewels were too good and precious for me to keep, therefore I sent them to the King and Queen’s Majesties as a present to witness my faith 10 and service. Oh, he that had seen what sorrow my children made when I sent the glass away, would have wondered ! for by reason of the great virtue therein, they oft gazed in the same, both to behold themselves, and to see how their clothing and apparel became them.

‘ Little did I then imagine that good *Kyward* was so near his death, for except himself, and *Bellin* the ram, I knew no messengers worthy to carry so rich a present. But I will search the whole world, and I 20 will find the murderer, for murder cannot be hid. It may be, he is in this presence which knows what is become of *Kyward*, albeit he do conceal it ; for the wicked walk like saints.

‘ I have seen the day when no matter was finished in the court without my advice and censure, though now that judgment is not so reputed ; yet it may be, the same reputation may spring up again, and be believed as firmly as before, as long as it swerves not from justice, which is the only thing I aim at. For if 30 any one can charge me otherwise and prove it by witness, here I stand to endure the uttermost the law

can inflict upon me ; but if malice only slander me without witness, I crave the combat according to the law and instance of the court.'

Then said the King, '*Reynard*, you say well, nor know I anything more of *Kyward's* death than the bringing of his head unto me by *Bellin* the ram, therefore of it I here acquit you.'

'My dear Lord,' said the fox, 'I humbly thank you : yet is his death so grievous unto me I cannot
10 let it pass so easily. I remember my heart was heavy at his departure, and I was ready to sink to the ground, which was a certain presage of the loss which happened.'

These words, and the sad looks of the fox, so amazed all the beholders, that they could not choose but believe all that he uttered, so that every one bemoaned his loss, and pitied his sorrow. But the King and Queen were most touched with the same, and then entreated him that he would make diligent
20 search for the finding of them out, for his praises had stricken them far in love with the jewels. And because he told them he had sent those jewels unto them, though they never saw them, yet they gave him as great thanks as if they had been in their safe possession, and desired him he would be a means they might be restored to them again.

CHAPTER XXI

How Isegrim proffered his glove to Reynard to fight with him, which Reynard accepted, and how Rukenaw advised the Fox how to carry himself in the fight.

[THUS *Reynard* made his peace with the King. He promised to search the world over for the lost jewels, and the King assured him he might go freely wherever he pleased and none should dare to complain of him. *Isegrim* alone of the beasts was unable to contain his anger at *Reynard's* success.]

The wolf said to the fox, 'I have forborne you long, therefore now look not to escape; wherefore seeing there is no other testimony but our own consciences, here before you, my Lord the King, and the rest of 10 my noble lords, friends, and alliances, here I affirm and will approve to the last drop of my blood that thou, *Reynard* the fox, art a false traitor and a murderer; and this I will approve and make good upon the body within the lists of the field, body against body, by which means our strife shall have an end, and in witness whereof I cast thee here my glove, which I dare thee to take up, that I may have right for mine injuries, or else die like a recreant.'

Reynard was something perplexed when he saw this, 20 for he knew himself much too weak for the wolf, and feared to come by the worst; but straight remembering the advantage he had, by reason that the wolf's fore-claws were pulled away and that they were not yet fully cured, he said, 'Whosoever he be that saith I am a traitor or a murderer, I say he lieth in his throat,

especially *Isegrim* above all others ; poor fool, thou bringest me to the place I desire, and to the purpose I wish for, in sign whereof I take up the gage, and throw down mine, to approve all thy words lies and falsehoods.'

This said, the King received their pledges, and admitted the battle, commanding them to put in their sureties, that the next morrow they should try the combat : then stepped forth the bear and the cat, 10 and were sureties for the wolf ; and for the fox were sureties *Grimbard* the brock and *Bitelus*, the first son of Dame *Rukenaw*. When all ceremonies were finished the she ape took *Reynard* aside, and said, ' Nephew, I beseech you take care of yourself in this battle, be bold and wise. Your uncle taught me once a prayer of singular virtue for him which was to fight ; and he learned it of that excellent scholar and clerk, the abbot of *Budelo*, and he that saith this prayer with a good devotion fasting, shall never be overcome in 20 combat ; and therefore, my best nephew, be not afraid, for to-morrow I will read it over to you, and the wolf shall never prevail against you.'

The fox gave her many thanks for her favours, and told her his quarrel was good and honest, and therefore he had no doubt of happy success ; so all that night he rested with his kinsfolk about him, who drowe away the time with pleasant discourse. But Dame *Rukenaw*, his aunt, still beat her brain how to work him advantage in the combat ; wherefore she 30 caused all his hair to be shaven off, even from his head to the tail, and then she anointed all his body quite over with oil of olive, so that she made it so

smooth and slippery that the wolf could catch no hold of him. Besides he was round, fat and plump of body, which much availed to his advantage; then she advised him, 'At these especial times keep your tail as close as can be between your legs, lest he catch hold thereon and pull you to the ground; also look carefully to yourself at the first, and by all means shun his blows, making him to toil and run after, especially there where most dust is, and spring it up with your feet, make it fly in his eyes, take your 10 advantage, and smite and bite him where you may do him most mischief, ever and anon striking him on the face with your tail, and that will take from him both sight and understanding. Besides, it will so tire and weary him, that, his feet not being fully cured of their hurt by the loss of his shoes, which you caused to be pulled off, he will not be able to pursue you; for though he is great, yet his heart is little and weak.

'This, nephew, is mine advice, and assure yourself 20 in these cases art prevaieth as much as courage; therefore regard yourself well, that not only yourself, but your whole family may gain honour and reputation from your fortune. As for the charm of prayer which your uncle *Martin* taught me, by which you may be invisible, it is this which followeth'; then laying her hand upon his head, she said, '*Blaerd, Shay, Alphenio, Rasbue, Gorsons, Arsbuntro*. Now, nephew, assure yourself you are free from all mischief or danger whatsoever, therefore go to your rest, for 30 it is near day, and some sleep will make the body better disposed.'

The fox gave her infinite thanks, and told her, 'She had bound him to her a servant for ever; and in those holy words she had spoken he had placed his confidence unremovable'; and so he laid him down to rest under a tree in the grass, till it was sunrise, at which time the otter came unto him and awaked him and gave a fat young duck to eat, saying, 'Dear cousin, I have toiled all this night to get this present for you, which I took from a fowler; here take and
10 eat it, and it shall give you vigour and courage.'

The fox gave him many thanks, and said, 'It was a fortunate handsel, and if he survived that day he should find he would requite it'; so the fox ate the duck without bread or sauce, more than his hunger, and to it he drank four great draughts of water, and then he went to the place appointed where the lists stood, with all his kindred attending on him.

When the King beheld *Reynard* thus shorn and oiled, he said to him, 'Well, fox, I see you are careful
20 of your own safety; you respect not beauty so you escape danger.'

The fox answered not a word, but bowing himself down humbly to the earth, both before the King and the Queen's Majesties, went forth into the field; and at the same time the wolf was also ready, and stood boasting, and giving out many proud and vainglorious speeches. The marshals and rulers of the lists were the leopard and the loss. These brought forth a book, on which the wolf swore and maintained his assertion
30 that the fox was a traitor and a murderer, which he would prove on his body, or else be counted a recreant. Then *Reynard* took the book, and swore he lied as a

false traitor and a thief, which he would prove on his body, or be accounted a recreant.

When these ceremonies were done, the marshals of the field bade them do their devoir. And then every creature avoided the lists, save Dame *Rukenaw*, who stood by the fox, and bade him remember the words and instructions she had given him, and call to mind how, when he was scarce seven years old, he had then wisdom enough to pass the darkest night without lantern or candle-light, or the help of the moon, when 10 any occasion required him : and that his experience was much greater, and his reputation of wisdom more frequent with his companions ; and therefore to work so as he might win the day, which would be an eternal monument to him and his family for ever.

To this the fox answered, ‘ My best aunt, assure yourself I will do my best, and not forget a tittle of your counsel. I doubt not but my friends shall reap honour and my foes shame by my actions.’ To this the ape said amen, and so departed. 20

CHAPTER XXII

Of the combat betwixt the Fox and the Wolf, the event, passages, and victory.

WHEN none but the combatants were in the lists, the wolf went towards the fox with infinite rage and fury, and thinking to take the fox in his forefeet, the fox leaped nimbly from him and the wolf pursued him, so that there began a tedious chase between them, on which their friends gazed. The wolf taking

larger strides than the fox often overtook him, and lifting up his feet to strike him, the fox avoided the blow and smote him on the face with his tail, so that the wolf was stricken almost blind, and he was forced to rest while he cleared his eyes; which advantage when *Reynard* saw, he scratched up the dust with his feet, and threw it in the eyes of the wolf.

This grieved him worse than the former, so that he durst follow him no longer, for the dust and sand
10 sticking in his eyes smarted so sore, that of force he must rub and wash it away, which *Reynard* seeing, with all the fury he had he ran upon him, and with his teeth gave him three sore wounds on his head, and scoffing said, 'Have I hit you, Mr. Wolf? I will yet hit you better; you have killed many a lamb and many an innocent beast, and would impose the fault upon me, but you shall find the price of your knavery. I am marked to punish thy sins, and I will give thee thy absolution bravely. Yet, not-
20 withstanding, if thou wilt kneel down and ask my forgiveness, and confess thyself vanquished, though thou be the worst thing living, yet I will spare thy life, for my pity makes me loath to kill thee.'

These words made *Isegrim* both mad and desperate, so that he knew not how to express his fury, his wounds bled, his eyes smarted, and his whole body was oppressed. So that in the height of his fury he lifted up his foot and struck the fox so great a blow that he felled him to the ground. But *Reynard*,
30 being nimble, quickly rose up again and encountered the wolf, that between them began a dreadful and doubtful combat.

The wolf was exceeding furious, and ten times he leaped to catch *Reynard* fast, but his skin was so slippery and oily he could not hold him. Nay, so wondrous nimble was he in the fight, that when the wolf thought to have him surest, he would shift himself between his legs and under his belly, and every time gave the wolf a bite with his teeth, or a slap on the face with his tail, that the poor wolf found nothing but despair in the conflict, albeit his strength was much the greater. 10

Thus many wounds and bitings passing on either side, the one expressing cunning, and the other strength, the one fury, the other temperance; in the end the wolf being enraged that the battle had continued so long, for had his feet been sound it had been much shorter, he said to himself, 'I will make an end of this combat, for I know my very weight is able to crush him to pieces; and I lose much of my reputation to suffer him thus long to contend against me.' 20

And this said, he struck the fox again so sore a blow on the head with his foot, that he fell down to the ground, and ere he could recover himself and arise, he caught him in his feet and threw him under him, lying upon him in such wise, as if he would have pressed him to death.

Now began the fox to be grievously afraid, and all his friends also, and all *Isegrim's* friends began to shout for joy; but the fox defended himself as well as he could with his claws, lying along, and the wolf 30 could not hurt him with his claws, his feet were so sore, only with his teeth he snatched at him to bite

him ; which, when the fox saw, he smote the wolf on the head with his fore-claws, so that he tore the skin between his brows and his ears, and one of his eyes hung out of his head, which put the wolf to infinite torment, and he howled out extremely. Then *Isegrim* wiping his face, the fox took advantage thereof, and with his struggling got upon his feet.

At which the wolf was angry, and striking after him, caught the fox in his arms, and held him fast ;
10 never was *Reynard* in so great a strait as then, for at that time great was their contention ; but anger now made the wolf forget his smart, and griping the fox altogether under him, as *Reynard* was defending himself his hand lighted into *Isegrim's* mouth, so that he was in danger of losing it. Then said the wolf to the fox, ' Now either yield thyself as vanquished, or else certainly I will kill thee ; neither thy dust, thy mocks, nor any subtle invention shall now save thee ; thou art now left utterly desperate, and my wounds
20 must have their satisfaction.'

When the fox heard this he thought it was a hard election, for both brought his ruin ; and suddenly concluding, he said, ' Dear uncle, since fortune commands me, I yield to be your servant, and at your commandments will travel for you to the Holy Land, or any other pilgrimage, or do any service which shall be beneficial to your soul or the souls of your forefathers. I will do for the King or for our holy father the Pope, I will hold of you my lands and revenues,
30 and as I, so shall all the rest of my kindred ; so that you shall be a lord of many lords, and none shall dare to move against you.

‘ Besides, whatsoever I get of pullets, geese, part-
ridges, or plover, flesh or fish, you, your wife, and
children shall have the first choice, ere any are eaten
by me. I will ever stand by your side, and where-
soever you go, no danger shall come near you ; you
are strong, and I am subtle ; we two joined together,
what force can prevail against us ? Again, we are
so near in blood, that nature forbids there should be
any enmity between us ; I would not have fought
against you had I been sure of victory, but that you
first appealed me, and then you know of necessity I
must do my uttermost. I have also in this battle
been courteous to you, and not shown my worst
violence, as I would on a stranger, for I know it is
the duty of a nephew to spare his uncle ; and this
you might well perceive by my running from you.
I tell you, it was an action much contrary to my
nature, for I might often have hurt you when I
refused, nor are you worse for me, by anything more
than the blemish of your eye, for which I am sorry, 20
and wished it had not happened ; yet thereby know
that you shall reap rather benefit than loss thereby,
for when other beasts in their sleep shut two windows,
you shall shut but one.

‘ As for my wife, children, and lineage, they shall
fall down at your feet before you in any presence ;
therefore, I humbly desire you, that you will suffer
poor *Reynard* to live. I know you will kill me, but
what will that avail you, when you shall never live in
safety for fear of revenge of my kindred ? There- 30
fore, temperance in any man’s wrath is excellent,
whereas rashness is ever the mother of repentance.

But, uncle, I know you to be valiant, wise, and discreet, and you rather seek honour, peace, and good fame than blood and revenge.'

Isegrim the wolf said, 'Infinite dissembler, how fain wouldst thou be freed of my servitude? Too well I understand thee, and know that if thou wert safe on thy feet thou wouldst forswear this submission; but know all the wealth in the world shall not buy out thy ransom, for thee and thy friends I
10 esteem them not, nor believe anything thou hast uttered. Too well I know thee, and am no bird for thy lime bush, chaff cannot deceive me. Oh, how wouldst thou triumph if I should believe thee, and say I wanted wit to understand thee; but thou shalt know I can look both on this side and beyond thee, thy many deceits used upon me have now armed me against thee. Thou sayest thou hast spared me in the battle; but look upon me, and my wounds will show how falsely thou liest; thou never gavest me a
20 time to breathe in, nor will I now give thee a minute to repent in.'

Now whilst *Isegrim* was thus talking, the fox bethought himself how he might best get free, and thrusting his other hand down he caught the wolf fast by the neck, and he wrung him so extremely hard thereby that he made him shriek and howl out with the anguish; then the fox drew his other hand out of his mouth, for the wolf was in such wondrous torment that he had much ado to contain himself
30 from swooning; for this torment exceeded above the pain of his eye, and in the end he fell over and over in a swoon; then presently *Reynard* leaped upon

him, and drew him about the lists and dragged him by the legs, and struck, wounded, and bit him in many places, so that all the whole field might take notice thereof.

At this, all *Isegrim's* friends were full of sorrow, and with great weeping and lamentation went to the King, and prayed him to be pleased to appease the combat, and take it into his own hands; which suit the King granted, and then the leopard and the loss, being marshals, entered the lists, and told the 10 fox and the wolf that the King would speak with them, and that the battle should there end, for he would take it into his own hands and determine thereof; as for themselves they had done sufficiently, neither would the King lose either of them. And to the fox they said the whole field gave him the victory.

The fox said, 'I humbly thank them, and what pleaseth my Lord the King to command I am ready to obey, for mine ambition is no further than to be victor; therefore, I beseech you, let my friends come 20 to attend me, that I may proceed by their advice.'

They answered it was reason; so presently came forth Dame *Slopecade* and *Grimbard* her husband, Dame *Rukenaw* with her two sisters, her two sons, and her daughter, the field mouse, the weasel, and above an hundred which would not have come if the fox had lost the conquest; for to him that hath honour will ever flock attendants; but to him that is in loss will nothing but contempt follow. Also, to the fox came the beaver, the otter, and both their 30 wives, the *Marten*, and the *Fitchews*, the *Ferret*, the *Squirrel*, and a world more than I can name, and all

because he was the victor; nay, divers which before had complained of him, were now of nearest kindred, and ready to do him all service. This is the fashion of the world; he that is rich and in favour can never be poor or hungry for friendship, every one will seem to love him, every one will imitate his fashions.

Then was a solemn feast held, trumpets were sounded, cornets winded, shawms, and all instruments warbled, and every one cried, 'Praised be Heaven for this glorious conquest.' *Reynard* thanked them all kindly, and received them with great joy and gladness; then asked their opinions whether he should yield the victory to the King or no; and Dame *Slopecade* said, 'Yea, by all means, cousin, for it stands with your honour, nor may you deny it.' And so, the marshals going before, they went all to the King, guarding the fox on every side, all the trumpets, pipes, and minstrelsy sounding before him.

When *Reynard* came before the King he fell on his knees, and the King bade him stand up, and said to him, '*Reynard*, you may well rejoice, for you have won much honour this day, therefore here I discharge you, and set you free to go whither your own will leads you, for all contestations I take upon myself, and will have it discussed by the wisest of the kingdom as soon as *Isegrim's* wounds shall be cured, at what time I will send for you, and so proceed to judgment.'

'My worthy and dread Lord,' said the fox, 'I am well repaid with anything that shall please you.'

CHAPTER XXIII

How the King forgave the Fox all things, and made him the greatest in his Land, and of his noble return home with all his kindred.

THE King said, ‘*Reynard*, you are one that owes me homage and fealty, and I hope I shall ever enjoy it ; and for your service here I make you one of the lords of my privy council. Take heed you do not anything unworthily, for here I place you in all your power and authority as formerly you were, hoping you will administer justice equally and truly. For as long as you employ your wit unto virtuous actions, so long the court cannot miss you ; for you are a star whose lustre exceeds all other, especially in finding out mischiefs and preventing them. Therefore, remember the moral you yourself told me, and be a lover of truth and equity. From henceforth I will be governed by your wisdom, and there shall not breathe that creature in any kingdom which shall do you injury ; but I will highly revenge it. This you shall proclaim through all the nation, and be the chief governor in the same, for the office of high bailiff here I freely bestow upon you, and I know you may reap great honour thereby.’ 20

All *Reynard’s* friends and kindred humbly thanked the King ; but he told them it was much short of that he intended to do for their sakes, and advised them all to admonish him to be careful of his faith and loyalty. This said Dame *Rukenaw*, ‘Believe it,

my Lord, we will not fail in that point, neither fear you the contrary : for should he prove otherwise, we would renounce him.'

Then the fox also thanked the King with fair and courteous words, saying, 'My gracious Lord, I am not worthy of these high honours you do me ; yet will ever study with my service how to deserve them ; nor shall my counsel at any time be wanting.'

And this said, he took his humble leave of the
10 King, and so departed with the rest of his friends and kindred.

Now whilst these passages happened, *Bruin* the bear, *Tibert* the cat, and *Ereswine* and her children, with the rest of their lineage, drew the wolf out of the field and laid him upon soft litters and hay, and covered him all over very warm, and dressed his wounds, which were to the number of five-and-twenty, by the help of many skilful leeches and surgeons. His sickness and weakness was so great
20 that his feeling was lost ; but they rubbed and chafed him on the temples and under the eyes, till he leaped out of his swoon, and howled so loud that all were amazed which heard him ; but the physicians gave him cordials to drink, and a dormiture or potion to make him sleep ; and then comforted his wife, telling her there was no danger or peril of his life. So the court broke up, and every beast returned to his own home.

Amongst the rest *Reynard* the fox took his leave of
30 the King and Queen ; she desired him not to be long absent from them. To whom he answered, 'That he would be ever ready at their service, as was his



bounden duty, and not himself alone, but all his friends and kindred also.'

And so begging license of his Majesty in all solemn manner and with fair speech, he departed from the court.

With *Reynard* all his friends and kinsfolk to the number of forty took their leave also of the King, and went away with the fox, who was no little glad that he had sped so well, and stood so far in the
10 King's favour. For now he had power enough to advance whom he pleased, and pull down any that envied his fortune.

After some travel the fox and all his friends came to his borough or castle of *Malepardus*, where every one, in noble and courteous manner, took leave of each other, and *Reynard* did to every one of them great reverence, and thanked them for the love and honour he had received from them; and so shook hands and departed.

20 The fox went to Dame *Ermelin* his wife, who welcomed him with great tenderness. And to her and her children he related at large all the wonders which had befallen him at the court, and missed no tittle or circumstance therein. Then grew they proud that his fortune was so excellent; and the fox spent his days from thenceforth with his wife and children in great joy and content.

NOTES

CHAPTER I

•P. 1, l. 1. **Feast of Pentecost** : Originally the Jewish festival held on the fiftieth day after the Passover. In the Christian Church, it is the festival of Whitsuntide (the seventh Sunday after Easter, *i.e.* the fiftieth day, reckoning inclusively), held in commemoration of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles.

P. 1, l. 2. **Whitsun** is so called because of the white robes worn at this festival by converts in the early Church or at christenings which, in the later history of the Church, were common on this feast.

P. 2, l. 7. **Isegrim . . . came with all his lineage** : According to old Germanic custom defendants appeared before the courts accompanied by their relatives.

CHAPTER II

P. 5, l. 25. **blame Reynard to take** : Qualifying infinitive, doing here the work of an adverb of reason : **To take** = because of his taking. So also to **complain** (c. 18), to **hate** (c. 19).

P. 6, l. 10. **Malepärdis** : the castle "in evil regions." Possibly the modern Maupertuis in Champagne. It is by no means possible, or even desirable to try, to locate all the place names in *Reynard*.

CHAPTER III

P. 6, l. 25. **Arden** : the Ardennes.

P. 9, l. 12. **my noon and my even song** : the seven canonical hours (*i.e.* times appointed by canon law for prayer) are : matins (sung between midnight and daybreak), prime (sung during the first hour after sunrise), tierce or terce (between sunrise and noon), sext (the sixth-hour office, originally sung at mid-day), none or noon (the office for the ninth hour, *i.e.* 3 p.m.), vespers or even-song, and compline (the service for 9 p.m.).

CHAPTER IV

P. 10, l. 10. **Placebo Domine** : the opening words of the Roman Catholic vespers for the dead. "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living" (Ps. cxvi. 9).

P. 11, l. 11. **I am not such a truant** . . . : I am not so lacking in discretion as to allow his knavery to get the better of me.

CHAPTER V

P. 11, l. 27. **Your goods** . . . **highness' mercy**. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, iv. 329, 352.

P. 13, l. 19. **besREW my heart** : a mild imprecation; [I] call a curse down on my heart.

P. 13, l. 29. **Hybla** : a town in Sicily famed for its bees. So in *Julius Caesar*, Cassius says the words of Antony "rob the Hybla bees, and leave them honeyless." "In Russia one of the popular names of the bear is 'Honey Eater'." (Jacobs.)

P. 16, l. 26. **It might well be a warning** . . . : when a person is in trouble, others will always do their best to make more for him.

P. 18, l. 18. **he cut the stream** : he plunged headlong into it.

P. 18, l. 22. **suspected not his calling** : Bruin took no notice of the priest's calling him.

P. 19, l. 19. **Monsieur, Dieu vous garde** : God save you, Sir!

P. 20, l. 2. **you can sing peccavi rarely** : you can say confession well. For *peccavi* see Glossary.

P. 20, l. 22. **he brings his death** . . . : he has so much blood on his head and forepaws.

CHAPTER VI

P. 21, l. 14. **his example** : the example I shall make of him.

P. 22, l. 5. **Saint Martin's birds** : St. Martin, Bishop of Tours, renowned for the sanctity of his life, died about 400 A.D. His festival is Nov. 11 (Martinmas, a Scottish quarter-day). What the Saint's special bird was does not seem to be known. It may have been the crow (cf. Virgil's *Sinistra cornix*).

CHAPTER VII

P. 24, l. 18. **couch their danger** . . . : conceal their dangerous traps so skilfully that a person acting rashly is soon taken by surprise.

P. 25, l. 8. **sauce** : So in *Henry V.* Fluellen cudgels the bragadocio Pistol, as "sauce" to the leek.

CHAPTER IX

P. 29, l. 11. **his countenance . . . garb**: he looked as light-hearted as ever.

P. 30, l. 9. **O how have I lost this noble peace**: It is difficult to get at Chanticleer's meaning. Perhaps in his grief he is satirical and means "What dreadful losses my family has sustained through this 'peace'!" The King's mild rebuke, which follows immediately, would seem to bear out this interpretation.

CHAPTER X

P. 31, l. 18. **in one and the other**: in all the accusations levelled against Reynard.

P. 32, l. 23. **had you judgment**: if you were wise. Tibert is taunting Isegrim into action, and Isegrim's reply to the taunt is to the effect that the Cat's anger is preventing him from seeing things in a reasonable light.

P. 34, l. 6. **to draw the King on his party**: to get the King on his side. 'Party' has something of the legal meaning: here = the defendant (Reynard) in a law-suit.

CHAPTER XI

P. 35, l. 19. **all was fish that came to my net**: I took all that I could get. (In what other expressions is 'fish' metaphorically used?)

P. 36, l. 6. **not in that I wanted**: not as being in poverty.

P. 37, l. 9. **how small a sand . . . to run**: what is the metaphor?

P. 37, l. 11. **what can the whole world . . .**: See St. Matt. xvi. 26. "The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose," as Antonio remarks of Shylock.

P. 37, l. 29. **King Ermerick's treasure**: Ermerick or Emmerich was a mythical King of the East Goths, whose vast treasures—those of the Nibelungen saga—were stored in a castle near Ghent.

P. 38, l. 13. **Gaunt**: *i.e.* Ghent, the chief town in the province of East Flanders.

P. 38, l. 13. **Elfe**: probably modern Waes, in Flanders, fifteen miles west of Antwerp.

P. 38, l. 22. **Acon**: modern Aachen or Aix-la-Chapelle, the capital of Charlemagne's Germanic dominions.

P. 39, l. 6. **the three Kings of Cologne**: the patrons of that city, where the names ascribed to them are Kaspar, Melchior and

Balthazar. The reputed bones of the Three Wise Men, the Magi, whom legend regards as three Eastern Kings, were presented to the Archbishop of Cologne by the Emperor Frederick on the fall of Milan, to which city they had been transferred from Constantinople. They are still preserved in a gold shrine in the Cathedral treasure house.

P. 41, l. 5. **Elve and Soame** : the Elbe and the Somme.

^ P. 41, l. 29. **tread upon me** : treat me with contempt.

P. 42, l. 1. **to lose himself to save you** : to come to ruin in his efforts to keep you safe. Perhaps an echo of St. Matt. x. 39.

P. 43, l. 10. **taking a straw from the ground** : a satirical allusion to one of the most ancient synabological forms which exist in the early laws of the Roman and Germanic nations. So, when a contract was concluded under the laws of the Feudal System, it was the custom for some object, such as a straw or a reed, to be picked up from the ground and then passed, as a pledge of surrender, between those making the contract. Our word *stipulation* (Latin *stipula*, diminutive of [*stips*], a straw or blade of corn), has its origin in this custom.

P. 43, l. 32. **Hustreloe** : the Forest of Hulsterlo, a few miles west of Antwerp. We share the Lion's ignorance concerning Crekenpit.

P. 45, l. 20. **the permission of meat . . .** : *i.e.* the supplies of food for six months were not sufficient for Isegrim alone.

CHAPTER XII

P. 46, l. 21. **whose offences . . . life** : who has done so much wrong that he ought to have been hanged. •

P. 48, l. 16. **laboured with the Queen** : importuned her.

P. 48, l. 21. **I am your pilgrim** : Reynard thus places himself under the Queen's special protection, and in return for material benefits received from her, is bound to confer spiritual blessings on her by praying for her soul.

P. 49, l. 4. **never so** : the sixteenth century phrase, where we now use 'ever so.'

CHAPTER XIII

P. 50, l. 8. **according to the custom due unto pilgrims** : a satirical allusion to the ceremonies connected with the consecration of pilgrims. "After certain prayers and psalms had been said over the intended pilgrims as they lay prostrate before the altar, they arose and the priest consecrated their scrip and staves. He then sprinkled holy water on their scrip and staves, and placed the scrip round the neck of each pilgrim, with other religious services" (Thoms).

P. 50, l. 16. **doctors** : *i.e.* of church law.

CHAPTER XIV

P. 54, l. 4. she grew into great admiration : she was greatly astonished.

P. 54, l. 6. from point to point : from one particular to another.

P. 55, l. 19. I would leave to respect . . . : I should prefer my wife and children to come to harm.

P. 56, l. 6. a great charge : strict instructions.

P. 56, l. 9. take upon him . . . letters : claim that he himself had written them.

CHAPTER XV

P. 62, l. 4. dead carcass : 'carcass' = dead body (not used of the human body). The word is also used contemptuously of a body, dead or alive : cf. 'take care of your carcass.'

P. 62, l. 21. gathered the feathers . . . : In accordance with ancient Teutonic custom, the body itself had to be brought before the court; later, some tangible evidence (here Sharpbeak's feathers) of the murder was considered sufficient.

CHAPTER XVI

P. 63, l. 18. that soft gender : the tender-hearted sex, women. So the king in *Hamlet* uses "the general gender" = the common people.

P. 64, l. 7. Mon Sire . . . : Sire, in God's name do not believe all that you are told ; and do not swear lightly.

P. 66, l. 12. how run the squares at court ? : what is the latest Court gossip ? 'Squares' is used figuratively, meaning events, matters ; and in this sense is found only in this obsolete phrase.

CHAPTER XVIII

P. 70, l. 26. pastoral business : the duties of a clergyman.

P. 71, l. 3. grief is easy . . . friends : Bacon says 'friendship "redoubleth joys and cutteth griefs in half."'

P. 72, l. 6. in sunder : asunder, apart.

P. 74, l. 7. equal lists : the right, as the equal of my enemy in respect of rank, to challenge him to combat.

P. 74, l. 10. stood constant : been always upheld.

P. 74, l. 17. no truth . . . countenance : he covers up his falsehoods so skilfully that his words appear to be true.

P. 73, l. 5. I will ever shake hands with charity : I will never refuse friendship that is proffered to me.

P. 75, l. 21. This you have no colour to deny : this you cannot deny under colour of any false plea.

CHAPTER XIX

P. 76, l. 8. she was in the presence : she was lady-in-waiting on the Queen.

P. 76, l. 14. some which wear furred gowns : *i.e.* lawyers.

P. 76 l. 18. I do not think but . . . : I am quite sure that . . .

P. 77, l. 14. your excuse would couch in another nature : what you have to say in defence of Reynard would be differently expressed ; *i.e.* you would think twice before you defended him at all.

P. 77, l. 24. your violence : the earnestness of your defence of him.

P. 78, l. 10. stick to spend : hesitate at spending.

P. 78, l. 21. a world of : a great many. The phrase is still used colloquially.

P. 79, l. 18. It is true you inform me : what you tell me is true.

P. 79, l. 21. look back . . . to : respect.

P. 79, l. 29. Thou hast put me . . . dried roses : you have given me a new lease of life.

P. 79, l. 31. I have one good foot to dance on : I have one reason for profound satisfaction. My Aunt's wisdom and affection have gone far towards securing my final acquittal.

CHAPTER XX

P. 80, l. 8. Jewels : These were (a) a ring of pure gold, crowned with a precious stone, red, white and green. Provided he were of noble birth, its wearer should never be hurt by lightning, heat or cold ; nor could he be conquered by his enemies. By its magic property, he would be healed of any disease, and his heart would never fail him. (b) A comb, made of the bone of Panther, the very savour of which cured all sickness. Between the greater teeth and the smaller ones was a space, on which was represented the story of the Judgment of Paris. (c) A glass mirror in which men might see whatever was done within a mile of them. It was cased in cedar wood on which were wrought many strange histories.

CHAPTER XXI

P. 83. "Trial by Combat was an ancient usage in English law which permitted the accused and accuser, in defect of sufficient direct evidence, to challenge each other to mortal combat, for issue of the dispute. . . . It consisted of a personal combat between the parties in presence of the court itself, and was grounded on the idea of an appeal to Providence, the expectation being that Heaven would give the victory to the innocent or injured party. . . . In *Richard II.* (I. iii.), in the quarrel between Norfolk and Bolingbroke, Shakespeare has preserved a perpetual record of this chivalrous solemnity" (*Chambers' Ency.*). In *Reynard* we have a parody of the ceremonial.

P. 84, l. 28. **beat her brain** : searched for ideas. "Cudgel thy brains no more about it," says the Clown in *Hamlet*. (Try to think of some other phrases in which 'beat' is used figuratively; e.g. 'to beat down the price of an article'.)

P. 86, l. 14. **more than his hunger** : Hunger is the best sauce'—a saying as old as Cicero.

CHAPTER XXII

P. 90, l. 23. **since fortune commands me** : since luck has gone against me.

P. 93, l. 15. **lose** : i.e. by death.

GLOSSARY

(*N.B.*—In the case of a word occurring frequently in the text, as a rule reference is made in the glossary only to the first occurrence.)

abide (10. 4), pay the penalty for (in this sense generally used with *dear* or *dearly*). Shakespeare uses both *abide* and *aby*.

abuse (43. 27), deceit.

accursed (45. 24), subject to a curse. Cf. "the accursed thing" in *Joshua* vi. 18.

admiration (31. 19), astonishment: not necessarily implying, as it now does, veneration.

admitted (84. 7), allowed.

amends (3. 5), found in pl. only. Reparation.

appeal (74. 25), make formal accusation against, impeach.

appease (93. 7), to quiet (a person, anger, etc.); here, put an end to the combat.

approve (83. 14), bring to the trial; hence, prove.

art (15. 16), craft; a meaning more easily seen in the adj. *artful*.

augurism (22. 30), more commonly *augury*, the practice of divining the future from observation of the habits of birds.

avoided (87. 5), left.

avow (79. 5), claim as a friend.

beads (9. 7), paternoster or rosary, a number of small balls strung together and used for counting the prayers recited. Cf. beadsman, bidding-prayer. In ch. xv. the Fox "says his beads."

beldame (16. 11), old women. Properly, grandmothers.

best (15. 6), dearest.

bootless (66. 2), of no avail.

bravely (80. 1), boldly, or perhaps merely 'well.'

bray (15. 20), utter harsh noises; properly used of the cry of the ass.

- brock** (5. 1), badger. One of the few Celtic words, apart from geographical terms, that survive in the language.
- bruted** (29. 7), reported. (Cf. Fr. *bruit*.)
- bumbards** (65. 15), bombards, weapons used for throwing bombs.
- bypath** (19. 2). When the adverb *by* is thus used as an attribute to a noun, it has the sense of secret or out-of-the-way. Cf. *by-road*, *by-street*.
- capital** (37. 24), literally, involving loss of the head, *i.e.* punishable by death. **Capital traitors** (51. 29), traitors whose wrongdoing merited the punishment of death.
- cates** (23. 23), dainties. Only used in plural.
- censure** (81. 26), criticism, judgment. (Cp. 46. 2.)
- chaff** (92. 12), properly, husks of corn winnowed out; hence anything of no value.
- challenge** (3. 29), claim as his own.
- clearly** (23. 27), fully. Cf. such phrases as 'to clear away, out,' etc.
- coney** (61. 8), rabbit. The word is still used in the North of England. The coney of the Psalms is an animal called the rock-badger, found in the clefts among the mountains of Palestine.
- confusion** (29. 23), overthrow.
- contestations** (94. 24), disputes.
- cordials** (96. 24), stimulants which revive the action of the heart. (Lat. *cor* = heart).
- couch** (24. 18), conceal. **Couched** (48. 14), lying bound.
- cousin** (68. 18), nephew. The word was formerly used of any kinsman.
- credo** (4. 11), creed; formal statement of religious beliefs, sometimes recited, sometimes sung to a musical accompaniment. Lat. *credo*, "I believe."
- cured** (10. 5), taken care of; attended to.
- curious** (40. 9), inquisitive.
- cursed** (80. 24), put under the penalties of excommunication. See *accursed*.
- dassen** (41. 16), badger. German *Dachs*.
- deformed** (77. 23), morally warped.
- despite** (75. 17), outrage, injury.
- detained** (3. 12), kept back (without any notion of forcible restraint).
- devoir** (87. 4), duty (French).
- dirges** (10. 7), funeral psalms. The word is a contraction of Latin *dirige* (*nos*), direct (*us*).